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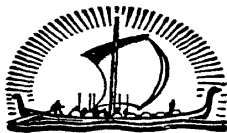
The Missing Macleans

BY GEOFFREY HOARE

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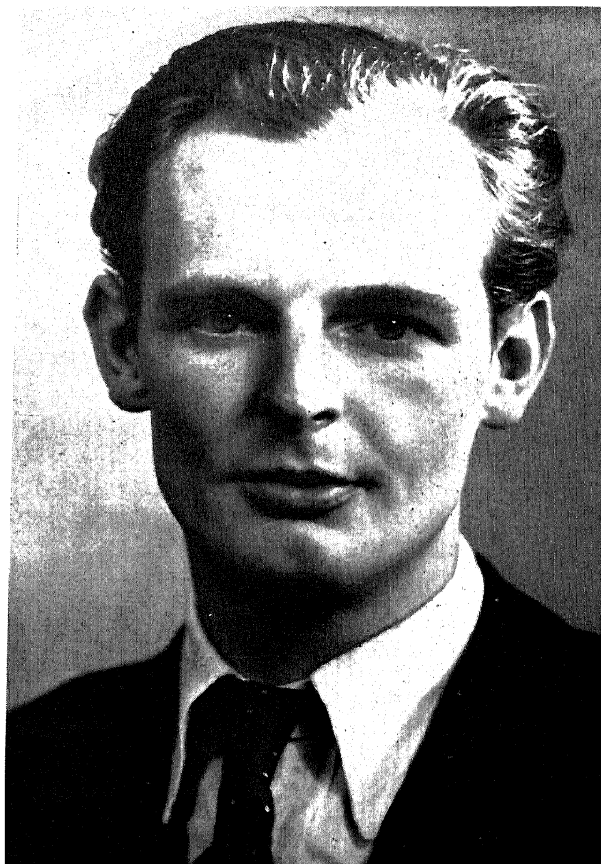
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Melinda Maclean



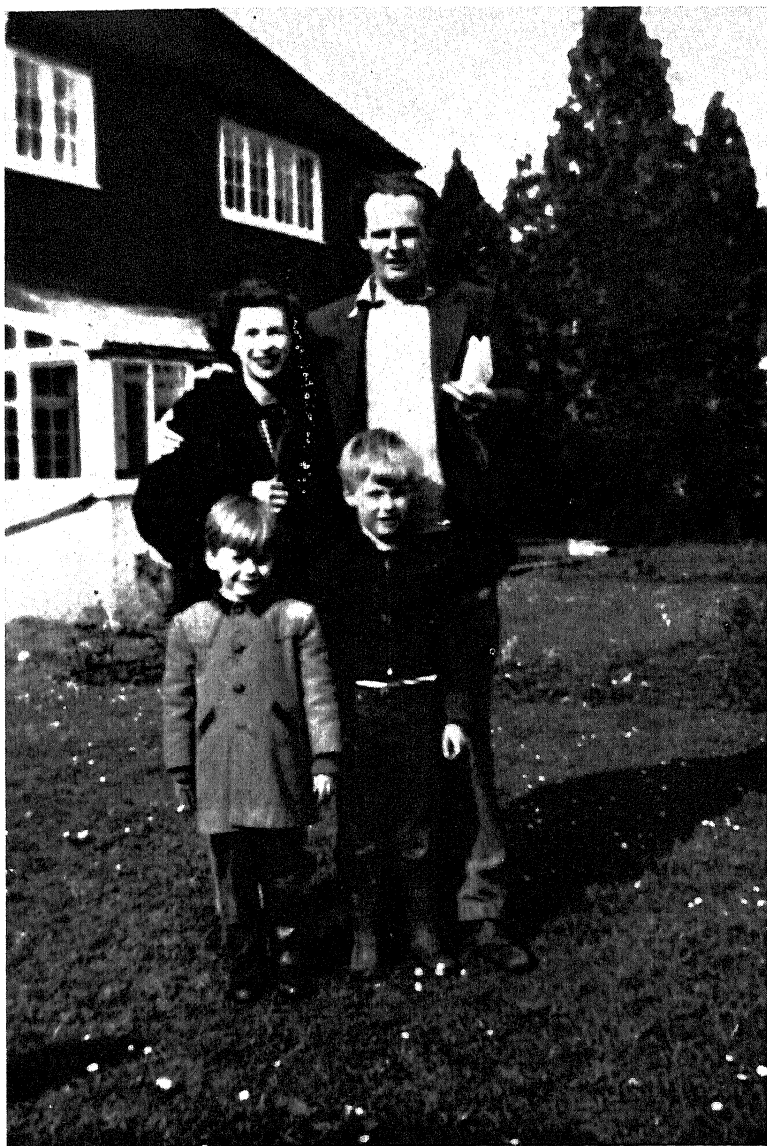
Donald Maclean



Melinda and Donald



Beaconshaw
Fergus in foreground



Melinda, Donald, and their sons in the garden at Beaconsshaw

Taken just before Donald's disappearance

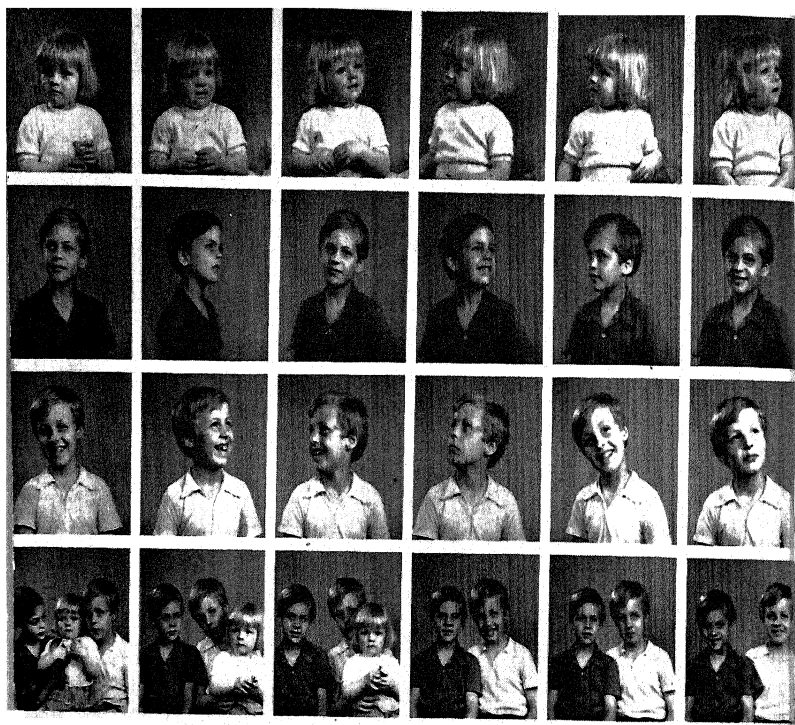


(Above) Melinda and the boys (about 1947)

(Below) Melinda and the baby, Pinkers, at Beaconsshaw in 1952



Melinda and the boys at Geneva a few months before they disappeared



The pictures of the children taken at Geneva for "Mrs. Smith"
 Number 23 apparently was the second from the left in the bottom row

The Missing Macleans

PART ONE

THE FIRST DISAPPEARANCE

For the world at large the mystery of the Missing Diplomats opened on Thursday, June 7, 1951, with premonitory banner headlines across the front pages of two English newspapers. On that pleasant summer morning the story itself, somewhat exiguous and hesitant, added little to the bold black headlines. Here, in fact, is what was printed in the *Daily Express*:

Scotland Yard officers and French detectives are hunting for two British Government employees who are believed to have left London with the intention of getting to Moscow.

According to a friend, they planned the journey to "serve their idealistic purposes."

One report says that the two men were employed by the Foreign Office, and there is a possibility they may have important papers with them.

News of their plan was given to the authorities by a friend

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who said they expected him to go with them. They were to go to France as if on holiday and then make their way behind the Iron Curtain. The friend backed out. Several experts have flown from London to France to work with the French Police. All French airports and frontiers are being watched. Plain-clothes men are searching the Montmartre area of Paris, where it is easy for anyone to hide. It is understood the Police are watching visitors to the Soviet Embassy in Paris.

The story in the *Daily Herald* was almost identical. It too amounted to no more than the alleged fact that two members of the British Foreign Service were thought to be missing and might be making their way behind the Iron Curtain.

No newspaper sensation could have had a better beginning. The story had all the ingredients of wide popularity: missing diplomats, flight to Moscow, important papers, airports and frontiers watched, Soviet Embassy involved, and so forth. The public, whose appetite had been sharpened on the Nunn May and Fuchs trials and the still unsolved disappearance of Professor Pontecorvo, ate it up with relish and clamoured for more.

More was forthcoming the same afternoon, when the Foreign Office—at least a week too late—reluctantly divulged sufficient details to give the brew more body. An announcement from Whitehall stated that two members of the Foreign Service had been missing from their homes since May 25. They were Mr. D. D. Maclean and Mr. G. de M. Burgess.

The announcement, as published in *The Times* of Friday, June 8, continued:

All possible inquiries are being made. It is known that they went to France a few days ago. Mr. Maclean had a breakdown a year ago owing to overstrain, but was believed fully to have recovered.

Owing to absence without leave, both have been suspended with effect from June 1.

That was the public beginning of the Maclean and Burgess mystery, and in the following three or four years probably more was to be published about it in newspapers and magazines all over the world than on any other single topic. Some of the information has been the result of painstaking, conscientious investigation, soberly and accurately presented; a lot has been sensational reporting of the worst type; too much has been unabashed third-rate fiction. Certainly the story has been neither easy nor satisfactory. After the details of the actual flight from England to France had been laboriously assembled, reporters had nothing to go on, nothing into which they could get their teeth, until Mrs. Melinda Maclean and her children also disappeared, twenty-seven months later. The authorities—a purposely vague term—have jealously guarded what little information they managed to obtain, and to this day there is no complete, reliable, confirmed account of where, why, and how Maclean and Burgess disappeared. Everything that has so far been written about this enormously interesting mystery has been inaccurate and incomplete, even

what might be considered straightforward accounts of the actual movements of the two men in the days prior to and immediately following the departure from Tatsfield.

The tragedy of these three people—Donald Duart Maclean, the rising young diplomat; his charming American wife Melinda; and that strange character Guy de Moncy Burgess—certainly had its origins far earlier than that fateful May night in 1951 when they sat round the dining-room table in a large, quiet house in the even quieter English countryside. An attempt is made in a later chapter to trace this mystery back to its real beginnings. For the moment let us consider the three principals as they were when they first became notorious.

Donald Maclean, aged thirty-seven and an infinitely promising senior official in the Foreign Service, had for six months been head of the American Department of the Foreign Office. This appointment had followed sick leave of six months, during which he was recovering from a nervous breakdown, which developed while he was serving as Counsellor and Head of Chancery in the British Embassy at Cairo. He was living with Melinda and their two children, Fergus, aged seven, and Donald, aged five, at Beaconsshaw, a large, rather isolated house at Tatsfield, near Westerham, in Kent. For a few months after he resumed work at the Foreign Office at the beginning of November, Donald Maclean had led a fairly regular life, catching an early train back to Tatsfield each evening and spending his spare time with Melinda and the children. In April this placid domesticity came to an end, and

he reverted gradually to the Donald of the earlier days in their married life, going from his office to bars and clubs in the West End instead of hastening home. About this time too he began spending nights in town, and on one or two occasions Melinda was without news of him for two or three days at a time. This is important in view of the circumstances of his disappearance.

The change in his behaviour coincided with the return to England of a friend whom he had seen in Cairo. Guy Burgess had been sent back from Washington, where he had been Second Secretary at the British Embassy, in considerable disgrace. He was on the point of forestalling possible dismissal from the Foreign Service by resigning, and was considering an offer of a well-paid and, one imagines, congenial post on a large London newspaper. Since his return to England on May 7 he had been living in London, renewing old friendships in a succession of luncheon, dinner, and drinking parties. There is no evidence, however, that his meetings with Donald Maclean were more than casual, even accidental: the men were not close friends.

Mrs. Maclean was expecting another baby, and as the birth, like the births of her two sons, was to be a difficult Caesarean the date was known well in advance—it was to be June 14. Her mother, Mrs. Dunbar, who had by a coincidence arrived in Cairo on a previously planned visit to Melinda just after Donald's precipitate return to London had left her in financial difficulties and in a state of considerable anxiety, and who then accompanied her daughter to

Spain and France before Melinda rejoined Donald in England, had gone back to the United States in November. She had promised to come to England about a fortnight before Melinda's baby was born, and then, while Melinda was recuperating, take the two small boys for a holiday in France, where they would be joined by their parents in August, when Donald's leave was due.

Melinda had passed an extremely busy and in many ways happy and tranquil winter in getting Beaconsshaw into some sort of shape. Her furniture had arrived from Washington and from Cairo, and she was endlessly occupied in making curtains, doing odd painting jobs, and making the neglected house into a home. The time from just before Christmas 1950 until the following spring was one of the happiest periods she had known. But this was not to last, and by the middle of May Donald's erratic behaviour was again casting shadows over her life. About this time, Mrs. Dunbar arrived back in Paris, to stay there with her youngest daughter Harriet, who had been in Cairo during Donald's breakdown and had since married an American named Jay Sheers. For some days before May 25 Donald had been asking Melinda when her mother would arrive—an inquiry that later assumed some significance.

On Thursday, May 24, the day before his thirty-eighth birthday, Donald told Melinda that a friend of his named Roger Styles—of whom she had not previously heard—would be coming down to dinner the next evening. Melinda was annoyed. With her baby due in only three weeks, she

was feeling wretched and in no condition to entertain—especially someone she did not know. Her small boys had measles, and even in ordinary circumstances, with only one daily servant who went home at teatime, Beaconsshaw was not an easy house to run: it was a relic of the opulent prewar days when servants were easy to obtain. In addition, Donald's sister Nancy and her American husband, and Mrs. Mary Maclean, widow of an elder brother who had been killed in the war, were to spend the week-end with them. For this reason, Donald had obtained permission to take Saturday morning off. There was nothing to be done but to accept the unwanted guest with good grace, and the next morning Melinda baked Donald a birthday cake and prepared a special dinner.

So far as can be ascertained, Donald Maclean spent most of Friday in a normal way—except possibly that his luncheon was more elaborate and prolonged than usual—and his manner was entirely normal. He caught his usual train, the 5:09 from Victoria to Oxted, and arrived home at the usual time—usual, that is to say, for those evenings when he went straight home from the office.

Before their guest arrived he said to Melinda, "After dinner Roger and I have to go out to see someone on business. I'm going to take a few things in case we have to spend the night." Not unreasonably, Melinda was extremely upset. She followed him into his dressing room, where he had gone to pack his pyjamas and shaving gear into a briefcase, and they argued. It was too bad that he had invited an unknown friend

for a birthday dinner which she had been, foolishly, hoping to spend alone with him, but it would be intolerable if he and his friend were then going to leave her alone at home for the evening. And he was not even sure that he would spend the night at Beaconsshaw. Did he realize that with his relatives arriving the next morning there would be a great deal of work to be done that she could not manage alone?—putting up beds in the guest rooms, looking after the central heating, and various other necessary household jobs which were Donald's small share in helping to run the house. Melinda begged him not to go. He said that he had to—and Melinda stormed out of the room and went downstairs.

Then occurred a pathetic little incident, which only came out two years later when Fergus told it to his grandmother. His father's and mother's voices raised in argument had wakened the little boy, who slept in an adjoining room, and after his mother had gone downstairs he got out of bed and went in to see his father. He asked, "Why are you going away, Daddy? Can I stand at the window and watch you go?" These were the last words he spoke to his father for at least two years and four months, possibly longer.

Donald replied, "You get back into your bed, you little scamp; I'm not going far; I shall be back soon." This conversation fixed itself imperishably in the seven-year-old boy's memory, presumably because, despite his father's promise, Maclean did not "come back soon."

Burgess arrived about thirty minutes after Donald, in a car he had hired that morning in his own name, and was

introduced to Melinda as Roger Styles. She found him charming and easy to talk to; he seems to have gone out of his way to be pleasant to her, and she was definitely attracted by him. So far as she could judge—and it must be remembered that she had never met him before—his manner was perfectly normal. There was certainly no obvious constraint; he appeared neither worried nor ill at ease, and neither he nor Donald that evening gave the impression of a man on the brink of deserting his family, his friends, his country, and his very way of life probably forever. There is one rather curious point. In going over the events of that never-to-be-forgotten evening, Melinda said afterwards that she had a vague feeling, based on nothing she could remember or fix positively, that Donald and Burgess had in fact travelled down from London together. Had they done so, it is not easy to see why they pretended to have come separately, Donald by train and Burgess in the car. It might be that after dropping Donald, either at the station, where he would have picked up his own car, which he sometimes drove there in the morning and used again on his return in the evening—no one seems to know whether he did so that day—or else near Beaconsshaw, Burgess had driven off to see someone who lived in the vicinity.

Dinner was a perfectly normal meal—three civilized people talking casually and amicably with no apparent signs of the mental turmoil through which two of them must surely have been passing. There was certainly no hint that evening of the catastrophic storm that was so soon to break over

those three lives. After dinner, Donald said casually that he and Roger had to go out to see someone on business. They would probably not be long, he said, but Melinda was not to be worried if they were late. Melinda, in the presence of a guest, asked merely whether the "business" could not possibly be put off until the morning, but Donald said regretfully that it could not. He then went out into the garden to make up the furnace, a job Melinda in her condition could not do. While he was away, Melinda and Burgess talked idly, and again Melinda was struck by Burgess's charm. Donald returned, and then, with some remark about not being long—there was no further reference to the possibility of his being away for the night—they went. And that was Melinda's farewell to her husband, and, for all its petty annoyances and disappointments, part of one of the most peaceful days she was to have for many months. She read for a time, and then, as there was no sign of Donald's return and she was very tired, she went to bed early.

The story of the flight to France has been repeatedly and fully told: it is indeed the only part of the disappearance of which there is reliable, corroborated evidence.

The two men left Tatsfield soon after nine P.M. in Burgess's hired car, and drove through the night to Southampton, roughly one hundred miles away, where they arrived around eleven forty-five. This represents an average speed of not much more than forty miles per hour but although Burgess is known to have been a reckless driver, it was night and it was a hired car; it seems fairly clear that they must have gone

direct to Southampton with no time for a stop anywhere en route except possibly for a quick drink.

That morning Burgess, again in his own name, had also booked two berths on a cross-Channel steamer, the *Falaise*, which left Southampton at midnight on Friday for a weekend excursion cruise to Saint-Malo and the Channel Islands, and returned to Southampton early on Monday morning. It was a curious way of going to France, and it is doubtful whether the generally accepted explanation, that they would be unlikely to meet anyone they knew on an excursion steamer and were thus less likely to attract attention, is sound. After all, there were hundreds of people flying to Paris or crossing by the more usual train and boat routes at that time of the year, and, as other features of the flight suggest, it did not seem to matter very much to them if they were noticed. This aspect of the disappearance is more closely studied in Part IV.

They drove up to the docks in Southampton with only a few minutes to spare; they were so pressed for time that Burgess did not trouble to park the car properly but left it standing on the quayside. This attracted the attention of a car-park attendant, who called out after them as they ran towards the boat. Burgess shouted in reply, "Back on Monday." This incident alone, involving, as it did, the discovery of the car still standing forlornly along the docks on Monday long after the *Falaise* had berthed, helped to identify them far more effectively than would have a chance encounter on the Paris plane. The *Falaise* reached Saint-Malo at nine A.M.

on Saturday, but Burgess and Maclean remained on board, drinking beer, until the other passengers had disembarked. They then went ashore, leaving in their cabins the luggage they had brought with them—Donald's briefcase and two suitcases of clothes belonging to Burgess. They appear to have deliberately missed a train that left Saint-Malo at eleven forty-five for Paris, and their actions as two men—fugitives they might even be called—who were trying to get away without being seen were fatuous beyond words. They were reported as having gone first into a café and then into a hotel to try to change English money, and then to have hired a taxi to drive them to Rennes, fifty miles away, where they could catch the train they had missed at Saint-Malo. It is even said that, having paid the driver his fare of forty-five hundred francs, they omitted to add a tip! There is certainly no evidence that they did in fact board the train, although they may well have done so; and while the story of the taxi journey was clearly related in good faith by the driver, the officials of the French Sûreté were by no means satisfied with its reliability. "The identification appeared to be open to doubt," they told me.

From that moment, Maclean and Burgess disappeared utterly and completely, and while it is probable that by the time the hue and cry opened they were already behind the Iron Curtain, no trace of their movements has ever been discovered. The quite remarkable difference between the stumbling amateurishness of the first part of the disappearance, from London to Saint-Malo—where everything seems

to have been calculated to draw attention to them or at least to assure that they would be remembered—and the slick professional efficiency of the second stage is one of the most curious aspects of the whole mystery, and is considered later.

At Tatsfield nothing of any particular note occurred on Saturday. The guests arrived, and Melinda had to explain to them that Donald had been unexpectedly called away—as she watched the drive with ever-increasing anxiety for his return. On Sunday, May 27, Mrs. Dunbar by chance telephoned from Paris to ask after the health of the two little boys. Melinda said in a low, miserable voice, “Oh, Mummy, I wish you would come over. I’m afraid Donald has gone off on a drinking party again.”

On Monday morning, still without news of Donald, Melinda telephoned to his office and was told that he had not arrived. That afternoon she again telephoned, but this time she spoke to Mr. G. A. Carey-Foster, the Foreign Office’s Chief Security Officer. She told him that Donald had gone away for the week-end with a friend named Roger Styles but had not returned. Mr. Carey-Foster was reassuring. “Don’t worry,” he said, “I’m sure your husband will be back soon. But I think it would be best if you said nothing at all about this to anyone else.”

Clearly, however, a more serious view was taken when the Chief Security Officer reported Donald Maclean’s “non-appearance,” and high-level inquiries were immediately opened. That night an urgent signal was sent out to all British diplomatic and consular posts on the Continent, alerting

them to look out for Maclean and his companion and report back on a "clear-the-line" level to the Prime Minister. In other words, the message was to have the highest possible priority and was to be sent in plain language, to avoid any delay in coding and decoding. At the same time, the various special branches—M.I. 5 in England, and M.I. 6 and other agencies abroad—were alerted, but no warning was sent to the French police or other European police. At this stage the Foreign Office obviously hoped it would be possible to find Donald Maclean and his companion and bring them back to England—had they indeed gone abroad—without any publicity, for it did not require much imagination to foresee the outcry that would accompany any leakage of the fact that a senior Foreign Service official was missing.

When did the Foreign Office know that Donald's companion was not the unknown Roger Styles but Guy Burgess, very much known in official circles? Burgess's mother, Mrs. Bassett, telephoned to the Foreign Office either on Monday or Tuesday to say that her son was missing. His disappearance had been noticed, despite the errant bohemianism of his usual life, because he had not kept two highly important engagements. Also, the captain of the *Falaise* had on the ship's return to England notified his superiors that two passengers had failed to rejoin the ship when it left Saint-Malo. It probably required no vast powers of deduction at least to suspect that the unidentifiable friend who had left Tatsfield with Donald Maclean was Guy Burgess and that the missing

passenger for whom Burgess booked a cabin on the *Falaise* was Maclean.

Mrs. Dunbar arrived from Paris on Wednesday, May 30, in response to Melinda's telephone appeal. She found her daughter, who was far from well anyhow, extremely worried and upset but by no means overcome by grief, for at that time she clearly expected Donald to return. He had been gone five days, and although that was a long time indeed for a drunken escapade—which was the explanation to which Melinda was clinging; she dared not think it was anything else—it did not seem to her entirely outside his extraordinary capacities.

It was on that day, in the London apartment of Lady Maclean, Donald's mother, that Melinda first met the senior M.I. 5 officer who was in charge of the investigations. He was brought there and not to Beaconsshaw by Mr. Carey-Foster because Melinda had to be in London to see her doctor. The interview that day was short and matter-of-fact: the investigators also seemed at that time to expect Donald to return—at least that was the impression they gave Melinda. But it is now clear that by May 30 the authorities must have been in possession of a good deal of information, and certainly knew that Donald's companion was Burgess and that they had gone to France. Obviously too, whatever Melinda may have believed, the authorities did not place much reliance on the early hypothesis of a hectic week-end in Paris; a drinking party that lasted for several days appeared

to them a little too Homeric for this rationed generation.

Obviously it was necessary sooner or later to extend the field of search and seek the cooperation of the French police. When was this done? The impression I gained in Paris at the time was that the French police were not informed of the disappearance until some six or seven days after it was discovered, that is, nine or ten days after Maclean and Burgess drove off from Tatsfield. Mr. Herbert Morrison, in his first statement to the House of Commons on June 11, denied that there had been a "six-day delay" and suggested that the cooperation of the French police had been requested only one day after the disappearance had become known. But informed they were, and to aid French detectives in their search M.I. 5 provided a good enough photograph of Burgess and an almost unrecognizable snapshot of Donald.

So far as keeping the secret was concerned, the sands were now fast running out. Once the French police knew, a leak was inevitable, and the only surprising thing is that it was so slow in arriving. On Wednesday, June 6, an inspector at the Sûreté Nationale told a French journalist who worked also as an informant for an English newspaper that they were looking for two missing British diplomats. That was sufficient. The Paris correspondent telephoned to his London office, various inquiries were made, and the next morning the news was blazoned across the front pages of two British newspapers. When Melinda read the headlines, TWO BRITISH DIPLOMATS MISSING, and the story below that suggested they were "trying to get to Moscow," she said pathetically to

Mrs. Dunbar, "Oh, Mummy, they can't be referring to Donald, can they?" It was a moment of weakness born of thirteen long days of suspense, thirteen days without any news at all. But after that, Melinda Maclean gave the world a lesson in loyalty, misplaced though it turned out to be. For at least eighteen months, even in the face of indications that seemed to leave little doubt that the two men were behind the Iron Curtain, she refused to admit it could possibly be true. "I will not admit that my husband, the father of my children, is a traitor to his country," was her invariable reply.

But her fears that the headlines pointed at Donald were confirmed the next morning. Not only were the names Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess impossible to avoid whenever one looked at a newspaper, impossible not to overhear in trains and tubes and buses and pubs, but telegrams from both missing men were received that day. There were two from Donald: one to his mother, signed by his childhood nickname "Teento," and the other to Melinda. They had been posted in the post office in the Place de la Bourse in Paris, which is open all night for telegrams, by a heavily made-up woman at ten P.M. the previous night. The original of the telegram received by Melinda contained many mistakes in English, most of which were corrected in transmission. It read:

MRS MAC LEAN MELINDA. BEACON SHAW. TATSFIELD NEAR WEST-
ERHAM. SURREY. ENGLAND. HAD TO LEAV UNEXPECTEDLY. TER-
RIBLY SORRY. AM QUITE WELL NOW. DON'T WORRY DARLING. I
LOVE YOU. PLEASE DON'T STOP. LOVING ME.

DONALD

This was both meaningless and frightening. The foreign handwriting and the obvious mistakes showed of course that Donald could not have written it. That meant either that he had had an accident or that he was no longer a free agent. But even if he had dictated it, he could at least have got the address right; he would not have placed Tatsfield in Surrey when he knew that it was in Kent. Anyhow, the whole message rang false: it was not a telegram Donald would ever have sent. "Am quite well now"—he had not been ill when he left. "Don't worry darling"—what insufferable futility! Donald knew Melinda well enough to be quite sure that even if, as has been suggested, the telegram was originally intended to be sent off a day or so after he left but had been delayed by the persons who had undertaken to post it, she would have been quite desperately worried—memories of the Cairo episode were still not far from the surface of Melinda's mind, and it was an experience she had no wish to repeat. This telegram, to be paralleled twenty-seven months later, after Melinda in her turn had disappeared, throws an interesting light on the mentality of the organizers of these disappearances. But in June 1951 the three telegrams added little to anything but the public sensation the mystery was causing, which, it is hardly necessary to add, was now quite tremendous.

The twofold search for the two men—unofficial and highly publicized by the press; official and shrouded in complete secrecy by the security organizations—reached its zenith during the next few days. While hordes of zealous

reporters besieged Tatsfield, swarms of their colleagues scoured the Continent. A few more details were added to the insignificant little hill of known facts, and a massive mountain of conjecture, speculation, and rumour soared higher and higher every day. What the police and the intelligence services discovered was not revealed, and if the Government knew anything they kept it very much to themselves. Sniped at angrily by a press that felt itself balked of official confirmation of its various theories about the Missing Diplomats and their fate—were they Communists? perverts? drunkards? Had they fled? been decoyed away? kidnapped? murdered?—the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Herbert Morrison, was finally forced to make a statement in the House of Commons on June 11. For any light it threw on the mystery of the Missing Diplomats, he might just as well have saved himself the trouble. As it is, however, an essential part of this tragic history, I feel it should be given in full.

Mr. Morrison said, "I have little to add to the Foreign Office statement issued on June 7. The absence abroad of Mr. Maclean and Mr. Burgess was established on Tuesday, May 29. Mr. Maclean had asked for and been granted permission to be absent from duty for private reasons on Saturday morning, May 26. Mr. Burgess was on leave pending a decision as to his future. The matter was at once placed in the hands of the appropriate authorities, who are receiving full collaboration from my department in their inquiries. On the same day, May 29, it was found that they had left Southampton ostensibly for a week-end cruise on the night

of May 25. They disembarked at Saint-Malo on May 26, but no further confirmed information has been received.

"Mr. Maclean, as has already been stated, suffered from a breakdown in Cairo a year ago due to overstrain. When he recovered he came to the Foreign Office as head of the American Department. Mr. Burgess had recently been recalled from the Embassy at Washington owing to his general unsuitability in the position he held, and the question of his future employment in the Foreign Service was under consideration.

"Mr. Burgess is not a member of the senior branch of the Foreign Service, but he held the temporary but local rank of Second Secretary in His Majesty's Embassy at Washington for a trial period. Neither Mr. Maclean nor Mr. Burgess has been dismissed. They have been suspended from duty pending the results of the inquiries which are being made. The question of their dismissal will depend on the result of these inquiries.

"The security aspects of the case are under investigation and it is not in the public interest to disclose them."

As can be imagined, this statement—which added nothing to the knowledge of anyone who had followed the case in the serious newspapers and neither confirmed nor denied the mass of miscellaneous and often highly coloured information dished up by the more popular organs—met with a chilly reception. A few other facts, more interesting than anything contained in the original statement, were elicited by a string of questions. The most important, and, to a country that was

seriously disturbed by the flight of two men who held responsible positions in the government service, the most reassuring, was the Foreign Secretary's assertion that there was no evidence that Maclean and Burgess had taken documents with them. But in reporting the debate the next day, the *Daily Telegraph* remarked with a certain acerbity that Mr. Morrison "appeared evasive" when asked whether the men possessed any knowledge that had potential value to Russia—which was, anyway, a fairly difficult question to answer. Who could know what these two men knew? Had they really been collecting information for Russia—of which there was no evidence at all—they could easily have gone outside their own particular niches in the Foreign Service. Mr. Morrison was at pains to decry the importance of Donald Maclean's position as head of the American Department—which Mr. Eden described as "perhaps the heaviest and most onerous position in the Foreign Office at the present time"—by pointing out that many of the "matters concerned with negotiations with the United States are actually dealt with in other departments." A Foreign Office spokesman followed this up the next day. He said that the American Department was not responsible for current questions such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization matters, the Japanese peace treaty, or problems considered by the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission. In fact, he said, it really concerned itself with "domestic developments inside the United States and questions of purely Anglo-American concern"—whatever that might mean.

What was extremely interesting in the Commons debate were the tributes to Donald Maclean. Mr. Morrison, after stating that the medical evidence was that Donald had fully recovered from his breakdown, said that "a report on Mr. Maclean's work was that he was an exceedingly able official." Then came Mr. Anthony Eden, who had been Foreign Secretary when Donald was at the British Embassy in Cairo. "May I be allowed to say, as Mr. Maclean was serving under me at the time in Egypt, that all the reports I received of the work he did there were very good indeed." (The mystery of Donald Maclean began long before he disappeared.)

And, to this day, that is really the sum total of all that "official sources"—the Foreign Office and the Government—had to say about the disappearance of Maclean and Burgess. There have been other statements—many of them—all equally negative, all equally unilluminating.

During these June days Melinda waited at Beaconsshaw in increasing distress and agony of mind for news of her missing husband; she waited also for the imminent birth of her baby. On June 12 her sister Harriet and her husband arrived at Tatsfield, and the next day Melinda went into the hospital. And there, in the early morning of Thursday, June 14, twenty days after he had deserted her at a time when above all a woman has need of her husband, she wrote a letter to Donald, which was found, still unopened, among the papers she left behind in her Geneva flat after her disappearance in September 1953. A previously used white envelope was sealed with a wide band of blue paper on which

was written in pencil, "To Donald Duart Maclean from Melinda Maclean." The letter, also in pencil, said:

My dearest Donald—

If you ever receive this letter it will mean that I shan't be here to tell you how much I love you and how really proud of you I am. My only regret is that perhaps you don't know how I feel about you.

I feel I leave behind and have had a wonderful gift in your love and the existence of Fergie and Donald. I am so looking forward to the new baby. It seems strangely like the first time and I think I shall really enjoy this baby completely. I never forget darling that you love me and am living for the moment when we shall all be together again.

All my deepest love and wishes for a happy life for you and the children.

Melinda

This letter was written before Melinda drifted slowly away into the anæsthetized sleep from which she might well have never emerged; for the birth of this baby, which, medically, she should not have had, was dangerous in the extreme. It was the letter of a courageous and generous girl, of a girl, moreover, who despite everything still loved the man whose child she was about to bear. And whatever happened afterwards, whatever she may have felt and said from time to time, this letter helps to explain her actions two years later.

But this touching letter had curious omissions: it made no reference of any kind to Donald's disappearance.

THE LONDON HOSPITAL.
WHITECHAPEL, E.1.
TEL. DIAMOND 3555.

Thursday 14th 1942
My dearest Donald -
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THE UNMAILED LETTER MELINDA WROTE TO DONALD BEFORE
SHE WENT INTO THE HOSPITAL IN JUNE 1951

Melinda was still taking the attitude that Donald was not a traitor and had not gone behind the Iron Curtain, and that is clearly what she believed. But what *did* she think had happened to him? One might have expected that in this possibly farewell letter there would be reference to the fact that he had left her, some such sentence as "wherever you are, whatever you are doing," some expression of her forgiveness for the grievous wrongs he had done her. On the other hand, if she had any knowledge or even suspicion of what Donald was doing, where he had gone, one would certainly have expected her to reveal it in a letter that was intended for Donald *only if she died*. Why she did not afterwards destroy this letter, why she kept it with her for twenty-seven months and then left it behind, is another mystery.

The baby, a delightful, healthy girl, was born during the morning, and although Melinda was extremely ill, she recovered fairly quickly. Fourteen days later she left the hospital to face again the tragic difficulties of being the wife of a Missing Diplomat.

By the time she returned to Beaconsshaw most of the press had realized that Melinda and her family knew nothing more about Donald's disappearance than what they read in the newspapers. She had, moreover, been requested by the Foreign Office to say nothing at all to the reporters who had from the first day swarmed into Tatsfield and laid siege to her home. "If they ring you up, call at the house, or otherwise try to question you, refer them to us" had been the advice given her by the Foreign Office Security Officer—

as if this would be likely to satisfy journalists assigned to what all members of the profession agreed was one of the biggest human-interest stories since the end of the war! Despite this, the persecution continued. Representatives of one national newspaper whose initiative far exceeded its good taste, its ethics, or even its common sense, continued for weeks to pester Melinda and the members of her family. They waylaid the children on their way to school and tried to question them and take their photographs; they attempted to bribe the charming and devoted village girl who worked for the Macleans; they prowled around the garden; were found peering into windows; and, as each fantastic new rumour or theory appeared, they would telephone to try to obtain Melinda's confirmation or opinion.

Their exploits were more than rivalled by a representative of a French magazine who, five days after Melinda's baby was born, penetrated into her hospital room with a large bunch of flowers and the solicitous smile of an anxious relative. No sooner had the nurse left than he whipped out a camera that he had concealed under his jacket and attempted to take Melinda's photograph. He fled when she threatened to summon the entire hospital staff and have him thrown out.

In the weeks between the birth of her baby daughter and the time she and her family left England for a holiday in the south of France, Melinda was near to the breaking point.

It was towards the end of July that Mrs. Dunbar, who had originally planned to take the two boys to France for a seaside holiday while Melinda had her baby, decided that

it was imperative to get Melinda away. Another daughter, Mrs. Catherine Terrell, went to France and, after consulting estate agents, rented a large, shabby house called La Sauvageonne, standing in its own grounds at Beauvallon, not far from Saint Tropez. Before they could go, two important developments occurred.

On Friday, August 3, five weeks after Melinda and her new baby daughter—also called Melinda—left the hospital, Mrs. Dunbar received two registered letters from Saint-Gall, near Zurich in Switzerland. One was from the Swiss Bank Corporation and the other from the Union Bank of Switzerland, and each contained a banker's draft in her name on a London bank for a thousand pounds. The printed forms accompanying the cheques were almost identical; they stated merely that the remittance was made "by order of Mr. Robert Becker, Hotel Central, Zurich." Mrs. Dunbar knew no Robert Becker and was expecting no money from Switzerland. But it was obvious that the money had come, in some way, from Donald Maclean and had been sent to her rather than to Melinda in case the name Maclean, still very much in the news, might attract attention. Mrs. Dunbar immediately rang up M.I. 5, and experts hurried down to Tatsfield to examine the letters and take them away for closer inspection. Detectives flew to Saint-Gall, where, with the help of the federal police, they attempted to trace Mr. Becker. They were unsuccessful. There is no institution in the world "closer" about its affairs and the affairs of its clients than a Swiss bank, and apart from a vague description

of the man who had bought two one-thousand-pound cheques and the information that he had indicated that he was staying at the Hotel Central, Zurich, and had given an address in New York, there was nothing else to be discovered. And even this was of little use. No one of that name, it was found, had stayed at the Hotel Central, and as for the New York address, it was non-existent; but, because of the way New York street numbers run, American detectives were able to state that Mr. Becker's residence, had it existed, would have been approximately in the middle of Central Park.

Then, two days later, Melinda received a letter from Donald. It was undated and bore no indication of where it had been written, but it had been posted the previous day, August 4, in England, at the main post office at Guildford in Surrey, only about twenty-five miles from Tatsfield. It was, in the circumstances, a most extraordinary letter—affectionate, loving, the kind of letter a husband suddenly called away on business might have written to his wife to explain that he was frightfully sorry he had gone off so hurriedly but would soon be back. It made no reference whatsoever to where he was or what he was doing. But it said that Melinda must know in her heart that he had to do what he had done (which meant absolutely nothing to Melinda) but that he still could not tell her why he went or where he had gone. He said, "I don't know what you must have thought of me, going off and leaving you with no money," and stated that he had sent two thousand pounds to her mother for her and the children

—"I thought it would be better that way." He hoped she and the children were well and asked tenderly after the new baby, which he knew had been born and was a girl. The letter contained a fatuous phrase: "I can imagine you with a daughter," which was not in the least like Donald, whose ordinary letters were amusing and far more sophisticated than that; and it asked whether the baby was fair like the other children or dark like Melinda. It ended with his love.

The letter was most carefully examined by officials of M.I. 5, who came rushing down to Tatsfield when Melinda telephoned to tell them she had received it. The writing was undoubtedly Donald's, but it was a little shaky, a little uncertain. The phraseology, if a little stilted, was on the whole that which Donald might conceivably have used, but it did not quite ring true, it was not quite Donald's natural style. Melinda felt that it was a letter Donald had written either within dictated limits or which he knew would have to stand cold, implacable scrutiny, making sure that he was giving nothing away. The paper was ordinary—it could have been bought anywhere in England or on the Continent. But that was of no importance. The people who had taken charge of him, who had arranged his flight, and who had permitted him to write this belated last letter to the wife he had deserted, were certainly in a position to obtain whatever kind of letter paper suited their purposes. Had it borne the letterhead of the Foreign Office or of the House of Commons or of the Athenæum Club, it could still have been written and dispatched in Moscow, to be posted by a Communist

agent in Paris, Rome, or London. The only possible points of significance were the reference to the new baby and the information that he had sent Melinda two thousand pounds. This meant that the letter had been written after June 14 and that Donald was aware that the baby had been born and was a girl, information that could be obtained from the announcements of births in *The Times* and from the columns of many other newspapers. The question of the money was interesting in its connection with the timing of the letter; it implied a very close liaison between agents in Switzerland and London, although the letter stated only that the money had been sent, and did not necessarily imply that Donald knew it had been received—which would indeed have been an outstanding feat of espionage.

But to Melinda the letter conveyed two facts of overwhelming importance: first, it seemed proof that Donald was still alive and disproof of the theories then being advanced that he was dead, either murdered deliberately by Communist agents or killed accidentally in a drunken brawl; and second, it told her what in her heart she was so anxious to know—that he still loved her. The letter, when it was returned to her by M.I. 5, became one of her most treasured possessions, to be carried constantly in her handbag, where it still reposed on that day just over two years later when she went off into the unknown to join the man who had written it to her.

On August 14, at the suggestion of M.I. 5, Mrs. Dunbar wrote to the two banks at Saint-Gall in the hope—not very

rosy—that as the money had been sent to her they might unbend sufficiently to give her a little more information. She pointed out that she knew no one called Robert Becker and asked if they could give her any further details of the unexpected remittance. As might have been foreseen, this ruse failed completely and the banks divulged no additional information of any value. It is probable, however, that they had nothing to add. Swiss banks are efficient, helpful, prosperous, but utterly incurious: no client, known or unknown, is likely to be frightened away by a number of unnecessary questions. The mysterious Mr. Becker, whose real name was certainly something entirely different, would have had to do nothing more than walk into each bank, fill in a form requesting that a remittance of one thousand pounds be made to Mrs. Dunbar in London, sign it with a name and an address no one would seek to or wish to verify, and pay the necessary sum. And this he could have done with a bundle of dollar bills or pound notes or possibly Swiss francs. That would be all.

Confirmation is to be found in the replies to her two letters that Mrs. Dunbar received. On August 22 the Swiss Bank Corporation wrote that the cheque for one thousand pounds “was ordered at our counter by Mr. Robert Becker. The cheque was paid for in cash by M^r. Becker, who is unknown to us, nor were any particulars given by him with regard to the remittance.”

Two days later the Union Bank of Switzerland also replied. They took a somewhat loftier line. They wrote: “We

do not know Mr. Becker. At the present time we are not in a position to communicate with the above-mentioned gentleman. We must leave it to you to return the said check to us."

What was to be done with the money? Mrs. Dunbar and Melinda were all for tearing up the cheques, but a wise official of M.I. 5 persuaded them not to. He pointed out that the money had been sent by Donald for the use of his wife and children, whom he had left, so far as any material support he was able to provide was concerned, practically penniless. There was, the official argued, no evidence at all that Donald was behind the Iron Curtain—he was in fact prepared to sign a declaration that they did not know where Donald was. At least keep the money and await developments, he urged. So, with the assistance of an urbane gentleman from the Foreign Office, Mrs. Dunbar opened a special account in a London bank and deposited in it the two thousand pounds.

The significance of this relatively large sum of money, arriving only nine weeks after a penniless Donald had disappeared, is clearly enormous and its place in the over-all mystery is discussed later. Life in the Foreign Service is difficult for anyone without private means, and Donald, who had none and was not a provident person, had always been chronically hard up. His abrupt and unplanned departure from Cairo left his wife more or less stranded there with little money and a lot of bills.

After his sick leave, Donald decided that he did not wish to go abroad again for some years and accepted a post at the

Foreign Office. This meant that he lost nearly all the allowances that make life a little easier for members of the Foreign Service abroad, and was reduced to his basic salary, which, even for the high rank of Counsellor, is only in the region of fifteen hundred pounds a year, minus income tax. That was indeed little on which to maintain a wife and two children in a large house in the country and to enable Donald to lead the kind of life he was living in the two or three months preceding his disappearance. So, when he drove off from Beaconsshaw on the night of May 25, he left Melinda with two or three pounds in her purse, with his own account overdrawn to the extent, it is believed, of just over one hundred pounds, and the usual accumulation of debts. So far as can be ascertained, the bank has made no efforts to have this overdraft paid off: certainly it did not approach Melinda for this purpose. Then, on June 1, 1951, the Foreign Office suspended Donald for being absent without leave, and from that day his wife received not a penny from her husband's grateful employers—no more salary, no gratuity, no pension. Melinda herself had a small private income but it was insufficient to keep her and her family. What would her position have been had she had no money of her own and no wealthy mother?

One reason why Mrs. Dunbar was sure that the two thousand pounds from Switzerland had in effect been sent by or for Donald was that it was the exact sum Melinda had raised on her American securities to make the down payment on Beaconsshaw. The remainder of the sixty-five-hun-

dred-pound purchase price had been obtained by a mortgage on which both interest and capital repayments had to continue after Donald had gone. If Donald was no longer providing for his family, Melinda and her mother felt that he had at least made an effort to repay part of his financial debt to Melinda. Where did Melinda think Donald had obtained this sum of money—more than one year's salary on his Foreign Office scale and yet amassed in some way in only nine weeks? She refused to believe he was behind the Iron Curtain or was in any other manner a traitor to his country. Yet he had obviously bridged the wide gap between virtual penury and a certain affluence in a remarkably short space of time. The only explanation certain of his friends could think of was the possibility that Donald had gone off with a wealthy woman who was providing him with money—that he had, in fact, become some kind of gigolo. It is a tribute to the many-sidedness of his complex but—except in certain aspects—not unattractive character that this explanation could have been quite seriously entertained.

On August 17 Melinda and her three children, her sister Mrs. Terrell and her little boy, and Mrs. Dunbar went to the south of France as they had originally planned long before Donald disappeared. They flew from London to Nice and then drove to the villa at Beauvallon that Mrs. Terrell had earlier rented for their joint summer holiday. M.I. 5 had not wanted them to go, and it was only on Mrs. Dunbar's insistence that she and her family had a perfect right to go abroad if they wished that they were permitted to leave.

But before they left, Melinda had one of her few unpleasant interviews with the security officers in charge of the case.

The senior M.I. 5 officer with whom Melinda had had all her dealings, a courteous and intelligent man who, if he had an iron hand, most carefully concealed it inside a velvet glove, telephoned to say that he wanted to talk to her before she left. But later he said he was indisposed with a bad knee and was sending a colleague in his place.

Whether this was a genuine excuse or whether, wishing to maintain his friendly relations with Melinda, he sent an assistant to obtain a second opinion, is anyone's guess. Up to this point the authorities had dealt very gently with Melinda. It had been fairly obvious right from the start that she was an utterly innocent victim and knew no more about Donald's disappearance than they did—certainly less. There had been no point at all in treating her with suspicion or with anything but kindness and politeness. The official who came down to Tatsfield in the middle of August had other ideas. He grilled Melinda on the most intimate details of her life with Donald. He suggested that she had known all along that Donald was a Communist, was probably a Communist herself, and was going off to join him.

Melinda, usually the gentlest of women, flared up. "You have proved nothing against my husband," she said. "Until you do, I'll never believe he was a traitor to his country." It was on these terms that the interview ended. But when the official had gone, Mrs. Dunbar found Melinda in tears. Again she was filled with agonizing doubts. Had Donald really been

a Communist all the time? Was that, she asked bleakly, why they had been so unhappy in Washington? "Oh, Mummy," she said helplessly, "maybe you can be married to a man for a long time and really never know him at all."

The Foreign Office too had not wanted them to go abroad. They thought that any departure from England at this juncture would be "inadvisable," would lead to more talk, more newspaper publicity. In this they were right; publicity blazed up again like the forest fires which, the previous year, had ravaged the hills round Beauvallon and turned the garden at La Sauvageonne into a browned and blackened wilderness. But Mrs. Dunbar had rightly insisted that Melinda must get away from Tatsfield for a time. She and her family and their friends had been trying to take Melinda's mind off the tragedy of which she was the central figure, but although Melinda was courageous and sensible, she was by now in desperately poor spiritual and physical shape. Her position was indeed unenviable. A shy, retiring girl, she had suddenly been thrust with shocking brutality into the forefront of the sort of publicity usually reserved for ambitious film stars or much-married millionairesses. "It was too terrible," she said to me one day. "It was like being suddenly forced to live like some strange, rare fish in an aquarium, with everybody looking at me, pointing at me, talking about me." But in reality it was worse than that, much worse. Ever since Donald's disappearance she had, in the words of a sympathetic and fair-minded leading article in *The Times* just after her own disappearance, "been pitilessly dogged by would-be detec-

tives." Although she had, to quote *The Times*, "done no wrong," she was suspected, abused, hounded. Her plight could have been no worse had she been the wife of a particularly horrible and notorious murderer, but in that case she would at least have known where she stood; at least that would have been final, and she would, to the best of her ability, have been able to remake her shattered life. What most people forgot was that, on the contrary, there was nothing final about Melinda's position: she was an excruciatingly unhappy woman whose husband was missing, who was forced to live in the twin hells of publicity and uncertainty; she had no better idea than anyone else what had happened to Donald. But to the public at large Donald was a lay figure, and their interest in his actions was academic, bred of curiosity. To her, he was very real, very dear; he was her husband, the father of her children, and her interest in him was most painfully vivid.

On the whole, the Beauvallon holiday was certainly worth while, although the first fortnight was almost continual torment. Alerted again by the most vigilant of the popular dailies, which sent out a clarion call that Melinda had gone to the south of France to meet her husband, reporters swarmed to Beauvallon for another round in the exciting game of cops and robbers provided by the Maclean story. They slipped into the wild, tattered garden through gaps in the fences and spied on every movement of every member of the family; they questioned the owner and his wife, who lived in a cottage in the grounds; and they bored

French police officers who had been posted there, presumably with the double task of protection and surveillance, and who even followed the family into the sea on surf boats! And each precious though unfortunately negative word was blown up into sentences pregnant with meaning—to the reporters and their editors if to no one else. When Melinda went for a drive in the beautiful hills behind Beauvallon, she had “left secretly for an isolated mountain villa where she expects to contact her missing husband,” and as her return that evening passed unnoticed, she had “stayed away two or three days,” which seemed somehow to make this imaginary rendezvous even more significant. This might have been merely a most extraordinarily futile waste of the time, money, and, more important, space in the two or three newspapers that continued to turn this badly needed holiday into a Fleet Street circus. It was also, unfortunately, a nerve-racking continuation of the weeks-old persecution for the people most intimately and disastrously concerned. I went down to Beauvallon from Paris at the end of September and persuaded a badly shaken Melinda—who at that time seemed to have aged ten years since I had last seen her, some ten months before—to dine with me in Saint Tropez. We left La Sauvageonne, with her mother and sister and brother-in-law, without attracting the attention of the amateur sleuths; but after dinner, as we were strolling along the quay, flash bulbs exploded as one of the ever-watchful photographers tried unsuccessfully to take our picture.

Soon after this, however, enthusiasm for the hunt began to

dwindle, as even the most credulous of editors began to realize that Melinda had been speaking neither more nor less than the truth when she insisted that her only reason for going to Beauvallon was for a holiday for herself and her children. It may then have dawned upon them that quite a lot of English people go to the south of France for their holiday, that Melinda and her family were American by birth, and that Americans are even more addicted to holidays in the south of France than are the English. The only extraordinary aspect of this part of the hunt for the Missing Diplomats was that any member of a newspaper staff could honestly believe that in the circumstances, with the knowledge that Melinda's every action was closely watched—both, one imagines, by discreet intelligence officers and by a noisy press—Donald, had he been in a position to do so, would have arranged so obvious a meeting with his wife. It is on the grounds of ordinary common sense that the gulf between the actions and the protestations of those newspapers that profess to be fulfilling a public duty becomes so wide. Anyway, the press hunt was temporarily called off and Melinda and her family were allowed to enjoy the last fortnight of their holiday in peace, before returning to Tatsfield on September 17 to face another lengthy period of heartbreaking suspense.

PART TWO

THEIR MEETING AND MARRIAGE

The seeds of personal tragedy are deeply planted and are invisible until they suddenly burst forth in an unexpected and bitter flowering. Few of the men and women who bear these germs within them show any outward signs that they have been stricken; there is nothing to single them out from their fellows until the tragedy occurs. The blow falls usually without warning, without premonition. Even then, it is often impossible to see why they, of all people, should have been the chosen victims. To their agonized, bewildered cry of "But why should this happen to *me*?" there is rarely an answer.

This is certainly the case with Melinda Maclean. There was nothing in her early life to suggest that she was likely to become one of the central figures in a world-famous *cause célèbre*. Her first twelve years differed in no major re-

spect from those of any other of the world's slightly more favoured children. She was born in Chicago on July 25, 1916, the eldest child of Francis and Melinda Marling.

On her father's side she came from English stock, and the Marlings are still a well-known Gloucestershire family. Francis Marling's father had migrated to the United States as a child, making him a first-generation American. Melinda's mother's family, the Goodletts, originally French Huguenots, were among the earliest settlers in America and had won established positions in public life, mainly in the law and the armed services.

On this side of the family, however, life had not run entirely smoothly, and Melinda Goodlett's childhood was marked by what was in those days a far more serious domestic tragedy than it is now. Her father, who had been born in Indiana and had gone East to preparatory school and to Yale University, from which he was graduated in 1886, became a patent lawyer and settled in Washington, later in New York, where he practised his profession. He married a beautiful and high-spirited girl, Blanche Wales, whose father was Surgeon-General to the Navy. When Melinda Goodlett, the second of three daughters—two brothers had died in infancy—was eight, her parents were divorced, and Melinda never saw or heard of her mother again. This not only caused a great disruption in the home life of the three Goodlett girls, but it did most serious harm to their father's career; divorce, in the United States in those days, especially among

those of the professional classes, was still considered something rather disgraceful.

At the age of twenty Melinda Goodlett eloped with Francis Marling. They were married in New York and lived there for a time before settling in Chicago, where Melinda Marling's birth was followed at intervals of two years by those of Catherine and Harriet. Their home life was extremely happy. Their mother carried on the traditions to which she herself had been born—of an almost open house, where numerous friends enjoyed wonderful food, good conversation and music, and a gay, stimulating atmosphere. Mrs. Marling was a woman of great character and intelligence, a fine musician, and a magnificent needlewoman.

In 1928, when Melinda was about twelve years of age, her mother separated from Francis Marling. While it may be entirely without importance and simply a coincidence, it is undoubtedly interesting to note that the three main characters in this modern tragedy were all separated from their fathers at an early age, for Donald's and Guy's fathers died before the boys were out of their teens. Of the three, only Donald can be said to have been left "fatherless," for Mrs. Burgess remarried, and so, after an interval of two years, did Mrs. Marling.

In October, 1929, Mrs. Marling took Melinda, aged thirteen, and her sisters to Switzerland. The girls went to school at Vevey, near Lausanne, where their mother rented a villa, and spent their holidays at Juan-les-Pins in France. The experience of attending a school in Europe while she was at an

impressionable age probably accounted for Melinda's desire to travel, to visit new countries, which undoubtedly played an important part in her adult life.

The following autumn Mrs. Marling returned to the United States, leaving the three little girls as boarders at their school in Vevey. They were happy at school, and after their mother had gone back to America, were looked after by a good friend of Mrs. Marling who lived in Vevey. During her visit to the United States Mrs. Marling obtained a divorce from her husband and married Hal Dunbar, of New York, a man of considerable means. She left him in the States and went to Switzerland to collect the children and take them back to their new home. They arrived in the middle of July, 1931, when Melinda was just fifteen. For the next three years Melinda, a somewhat disinterested pupil—for she had no academic tastes—attended the Spence School, one of the three leading girls' schools in New York. When she left at the end of 1934 she had taken the usual school examinations but did not, as her sisters did, go on to college. She lived at home with her parents for a time and enjoyed life, her many friends, her wide popularity, and a variety of interests. From time to time she would have pangs of conscience at her lazy, carefree life and would declare that she must "get a job." For this purpose she would buy herself a simple little black frock with a neat white collar—the correct attire in which to be interviewed by prospective employers and impress them with one's seriousness and suitability—but somehow Melinda rarely confronted the initial obstacle of

the interview, and the job, as well as the little black frock, were gradually forgotten, until a new urge to become a more serious citizen seized her.

But she did take part of a secretarial course and she did for a few months work in Macy's book department. In 1936 her mother and stepfather went abroad, and Melinda, who had inherited a little money, went, with her mother's blessing, to live in the American Women's Association Hotel. This is in the tradition of American girls who feel they want to be independent and live their own lives. Melinda was followed later by Catherine and Harriet, who eventually took an apartment together.

And so the years passed, the happy years in a world in which happiness was still possible. Then, in the high summer of 1938, came the turning point in Melinda's life, although, like so many other predestined victims of tragedy, she was utterly unaware that anything of any significance had happened. With the dark clouds of war already massing but still below the horizon, Melinda went to Paris to perfect her French and to take a course in French literature and artistic appreciation at the Sorbonne. And there—although there were still to be two happy, carefree years ahead—she was to put an end to the past and to travel a new road that stretched ahead, a road that led through Paris, London, Washington, Cairo, and Geneva—to Moscow.

What was she like, this girl who through no fault of her own was to achieve such terrible notoriety as the wife of

one of the Missing Diplomats? She had been, by all accounts, an enchanting child—gay, affectionate, highly imaginative—and she grew to be a charming woman.

The Goodletts were from the days of Melinda's great-grandfather always a singularly close-knit family, and family loyalty was one of their tenets of behaviour. This was inherent in the three girls, who, with their mother, maintained always the closest and most enduring friendships with one another. They had tastes and interests and friends in common, and in time of trouble or sorrow they would join together, even if it meant a journey half across the world, to help and comfort one another. At one time it seemed to her sisters that Melinda, the eldest, although invariably kind and understanding, became a shade preoccupied by her own affairs. But this disappeared as they all became adults.

Melinda was remembered with affection by people who had anything to do with her. When her baby daughter was born, three weeks after Donald's disappearance, Mrs. Dunbar received a touching letter from an Englishwoman who had been headmistress of the school Melinda attended at Vevey in Switzerland *twenty-two years before*. It said:

Dear Mrs. Dunbar,

I am so glad to see that Melinda has a daughter.

About two years ago Mme. Quesné told me that Melinda was in England and married to an Englishman. Unfortunately she did not succeed in getting me his address. It remained for this sad business to find her address in the papers.

Do please give her my love. I always remember her as a most lovable character at La Péraille. I do hope her two younger sisters are well and happy.

Do give my warmest love to Melinda; it is a great thing to have a daughter as well as two boys.

In retrospect, it is not always easy to decide exactly where Melinda's charm lay, for she was changeable, and her appearance changed with her moods. She was attractive rather than beautiful, with a little oval face, pale skin, and dark eyes and hair, but could, when animated, look quite lovely. Her voice was slightly husky, slightly breathless, American in timbre certainly, but the almost accentless voice of the educated, travelled classes. Her sisters—usually any girl's most candid critics—say that until the birth of her first child Melinda had an exquisite figure—and indeed when I first met her, when she was thirty-two, she could have changed very little, for she was still extremely attractive.

She dressed with excellent taste but did not appear to be deeply interested in clothes. She had the kind of casual, effortless elegance that can make even a battle dress look smart, and she seemed to prefer old clothes to new, a somewhat unusual taste in a woman. A possible explanation for this may be that she was so often preoccupied with her own thoughts and dreams—whatever they were. An incident highly revealing of Melinda's attitude towards clothes occurred while she and Donald were living in Washington. At the time, he was First Secretary at the British Embassy there and they were invited to a White House ball—Melinda's first. Her

immediate reaction was the entirely feminine one of "I've absolutely nothing to wear." The second step was also normal—frantic telephone messages to her favourite New York store to order a dazzling new creation. But then came an abrupt departure from the accepted pattern of feminine behaviour. The dress arrived, was tried on, approved—and practically forgotten. Melinda simply could not be bothered with it, and she went to the ball in a charming frock belonging to one of her sisters.

Another incident, which shows her ability to adapt herself to circumstances, occurred in Egypt some years later. Donald had already flown home to London, and Melinda, with her children and her mother, had arrived in Alexandria, whence they were to sail for Spain the following morning. In preparation for her journey Melinda had had her hair cut, then washed and set it. She was sitting in her hotel bedroom with her hair still wet when friends arrived and begged her to go out with them. It was a smart party, and the plan was to have dinner in Alexandria's leading restaurant, followed by the usual round of night clubs. At first Melinda refused—not only was her hair dripping wet but she was wearing a blouse and a skirt and all her other clothes were packed. On her friends' insistence, Melinda changed her mind. She took a freshly laundered face towel, wound it turban-like round her undried hair, fixed it with a jewelled pin, and went out for the evening looking ravishing!

She was warm, generous, and loyal and had an undefinable fey quality, but she was full of inconsistencies, and although

on a facile assessment she might be put down as a simple, straightforward person, easy to read and easy to understand, she was in fact a complex character, a mass of contradictions. She was always very popular in almost any circle, and yet she completely lacked self-confidence; she was naturally shy yet gregarious as a starling; extremely lazy but given to sudden bursts of energy; generally vague but capable of decision and determination; vain but curiously humble; apparently frail and defenceless but in fact tough and self-reliant; and although she was generally tractable, she could on occasion be quite dominant. But there were no two Melindas. Unlike Donald, who was definitely a split personality, one man one day and quite another the next, Melinda was a living amalgam of moods and tempers, differing from hour to hour as another facet of her personality was brought out. She lived on her emotions, was swayed primarily by her emotions. She had an excellent mind but was mentally lazy and rarely took the trouble to think things out for herself if she could find someone to do it for her. Thus when she met Donald she became completely under the influence of his keen, incisive mind and his knowledge of the world—already so much greater than her own. Imperceptibly, unconsciously even, Melinda began to take her views from Donald—except possibly on politics, in which she always seemed utterly without interest—and this, plus her loyalty and to some extent her vanity, was her undoing. But if she was dependent upon Donald, he, as the mass of letters she left behind when she followed him into exile show, was also dependent upon her.

Melinda's attitude towards the financial side of her problems was a curious mixture of diffidence and independence. From the time of her late teens she had a little money of her own, but although this was insufficient for her to live on after Donald had gone and the Foreign Office had erased his name from their payroll, she never asked her mother for money.

"Anything I gave her—" Mrs. Dunbar told me, "and it was usually clothes and things like that—I had to urge on her. She never once all through her life asked me for anything. This was true even during the last year when we lived together in Geneva. She even demurred when I wanted to buy things for the children."

Whenever she could, Melinda tried to resolve her difficulties herself, despite the fact that her mother was always delighted to give her all the help she could.

But her first meeting with Donald was still over a year in the future when in the exciting early summer of 1938 Melinda arrived in Paris. She was young—not yet twenty-two—attractive, independent, and avid for life, and she was all these things in the loveliest and most stimulating city in the world. Tragedy must have seemed as remote as Chicago. At first she lived with a French family somewhere in the rather bourgeois district around the Étoile, but she enrolled at the Sorbonne—had she not come to France to study?—and gravitated naturally to the Left Bank, and if the Sorbonne did not see her overmuch, the gay, exciting Latin Quarter, so much gayer and more exciting then than it is today, remained her spiritual home all the time she was in France.

Later she took a room at the Hotel Montana, next door to the Café Flore, then at the height of its fame as the meeting place of artists, writers, and talkers, and patronized by Picasso and Sartre. There she made most of her Paris friends, and there she met Donald.

The following year, that year of doom 1939, she was joined in Paris by her youngest sister Harriet, whom she was delighted to introduce to the pleasures and glories of the city. Harriet was at this time an undergraduate at Smith College, taking French as one of her subjects, and she was to spend her junior year at the Sorbonne with a chaperoned group from her college. As Melinda was already in Paris, Mrs. Dunbar allowed Harriet to come over earlier; she was to join her college group when they arrived in September.

By the time Harriet arrived Melinda was very much at home. She had become one of the most popular denizens of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, known and liked by most of the habitués of the Flore, the Deux Magots, and the Brasserie Lipp—where she frequently ate her meals, for she was a little better off than the majority of students. In all these places, and in a dozen other popular cafés and bars of the Quarter, she could be sure of a welcome as soon as she appeared. And yet often she would hesitate outside the door, too overcome by shyness to enter. But when she did, there was no trace in her of the boisterousness, of the self-assertiveness, that many shy people employ as a screen to hide their timidity; she always had the facility, born of the strict train-

ing in good manners upon which her mother was always so insistent, of behaving naturally in all surroundings.

There is another sidelight on Melinda's endearing but still childlike and unformed character at this period of her life: although she was doing practically no serious work, she invariably carried around with her an imposing bundle of learned-looking books, flanked rather ostentatiously by unread copies of the more advanced literary reviews of the day. For reading, she preferred magazines devoted to the cinema and its stars, and this remained, most curiously, one of her secret vices. She did not talk particularly about the cinema and she rarely went to a picture; but for reasons best known to herself she liked to read about the private lives of the much-publicized and flashy figures who make so handsome a living by appearing on the screen. A harmless enough drug.

Melinda had another extremely curious habit, almost a vice, for a young, delicate-seeming woman. She smoked cigars—not little “whiffleroes” or anything like that: a good Havana was one of her greatest pleasures. On the other hand, she was not a heavy cigarette smoker.

During the summer Melinda and Harriet hired a car and set off to see as much of France as they could. They drove through the châteaux country of the Loire and on to Carcassonne before turning back to Paris. They had no idea what was happening until they arrived back in the capital and found that war had broken out. As good citizens, they

reported to the American Embassy and were told to go to Saint-Malo to await evacuation to America.

At Saint-Malo they had to put up at a small hotel, where they found they were sharing their room with a considerable and active family of bedbugs; so war or no war—and that's what it looked like at the time—they fled Saint-Malo and returned to the comfort of the Hotel Montana in Paris, where at least they would know what was going on. At the last moment Harriet found that the Smith College group had been cancelled—in fact the girls had been taken off the boat on the day they were due to sail from New York. Mrs. Dunbar agreed that Melinda could stay on in Paris, but she wanted Harriet to return to the States to take her degree. This was in September. It took Harriet until November to obtain passage to America. Twice a week the girls had a farewell party, and they would all go down to the boat train to see Harriet off, only to find that it was not leaving, the ship's sailing had been cancelled.

Melinda and Harriet were naturally somewhat concerned in this time of strain and uncertainty. Their friends of all nationalities were departing to join the forces or to return to their anxious families, and Melinda was desperately distressed because some of her friends were being sent into internment camps. But the sisters were young and buoyant, and even the tremendous tension of those days could not keep them down for long.

There is no doubt that until her marriage, and despite the war, Melinda led an extremely happy, carefree life. She had

many friends and many affairs, which she seemed to take lightly. She was not really studious; she had no deep academic or artistic tastes—although she was interested in painting, architecture, the theatre, and particularly ballet—and apart from a normal preoccupation with the war, the affairs of the world in which she was living appeared mainly to pass over the top of her pretty head. But Melinda was neither a stupid nor a negative person; she was just someone who had never really found her feet, never really discovered what she wanted from life, what she could really take a serious interest in. All this added to the powerful sway of her emotions made her easy game for a stronger, more mature person—for Donald Maclean, in short. What influence did he have upon her? In what direction did he lead her?

Before I try to answer that question, let us examine Donald himself.

Had Donald Maclean been born a century earlier he would in all probability have gone down in history as a great and outstanding Englishman instead of being remembered as one of the Missing Diplomats. His tragedy lay in the fact that his qualities of mind and character and his outlook on life fitted him to be a militant liberal; but by the time he became politically conscious, the world had little use for liberals, and Donald, as was almost inevitable, went much farther to the left. At the time of his birth, just before the First World War, liberalism was already slowly being submerged beneath the extreme forces of right and left into which the

world was soon to divide. And by the time he grew to maturity there was no space left in the middle of the road, for the extremes met and glared fiercely at each other right on the central dividing line.

Maclean was passionately interested in ordinary men and women and their problems, and, as a true liberal, he was prepared to fight to preserve their rights and liberties. But he slowly discovered that champions of lost causes were voices crying in the wilderness, scorned by the right and insincerely wooed by the extreme left, which had no love for these crusaders but wished to use them for their own ends. A little earlier, Donald would have been a Socialist, but by the period between wars Socialism had become too established, too unadventurous, too hidebound for the young intellectuals of the day.

Donald Duart Maclean was born in London on May 25, 1913, the third of five children of Sir Donald Maclean, M. P., and his wife Gwendolen Margaret, daughter of Mr. Andrew Devitt, Justice of the Peace of Oxted in Surrey. Donald's father came very near to being a great man—certainly he was great in character, a man of infinite goodness, kindness, sincerity, and courage.

"I esteemed him beyond most men, perhaps more than any man I have known of recent years," wrote Sir James Barrie in a letter of appreciation in *The Times* after Sir Donald's death. But his intellectual attainments, while of a high order, did not quite reach greatness. He was, nevertheless, one of the outstanding politicians of the day; and had he not died

prematurely of a heart attack at the age of sixty-eight—when he was already a cabinet minister—he might well have risen to greater eminence. A man of his exceptional character—"an earnest and convinced liberal without prefix or suffix," as *The Times* said of him—he would have been an invaluable stiffening to the weak-kneed cabinets of the appeasement years.

The Macleans were a Highland family originally from the island of Tiree in the Outer Hebrides, where Donald's grandfather had been a fisherman-farmer before he crossed to the mainland and went into business. It was Donald's grandmother, however—a Scottish matriarch who lived to the respectable age of ninety-one and who spoke Gaelic to her family to the end of her days—who was the dominant, driving force of the family. It was at her insistence that the Macleans had migrated to Wales, where, despite a desire to go into medicine, Donald's father was articled to a solicitor. He practised in Cardiff and London before entering politics. He contested the Bath division unsuccessfully in 1900, but was elected in 1906, and politically never looked back, although this success was won at the expense of his law business and consequently of his income. When the senior Maclean entered Parliament, the family moved to London, maintaining also a cottage at Penn in Buckinghamshire. A slight but vivid glimpse of life in the Maclean household was given in the Barrie letter. He wrote:

You did not know him at all unless you know his religion. He was in London as much a Scotch Presbyterian as though

he had never left his native Tiree. He was an elder of the church and in his home held that "family exercise" in which a Scottish household is seen at its best.

These family prayers, which lasted for fifteen minutes every morning, were among Donald Maclean's earliest and strongest memories.

The letter continued:

He was a man of natural piety, never troubled, I should say, by any doubts on the great matter, which gave a serene quality to his cheerfulness and his ever ready sense of humour. He was not such a strict non-smoker and teetotalter as some have written, for at times he lit a cigarette to please me, and I have almost as nobly looked the other way when he got rid of it. On a special occasion I have also seen a ginger-beer bottle in his hand. He was, I think, a very happy man . . . happy in his home . . .

That was the home in which Donald grew up and which prepared him for the world. He was born with many advantages: good health, an excellent mind, more than average good looks, an amiable and equable disposition, the example and inspiration of a father of whom it is no exaggeration to say that he was one of the most respected men in British public life. But as so frequently happens with this kind of upbringing and this type of background, there was a strong, if involuntary, reaction against them. The "shadow of an august atmosphere" had lain too heavily on Donald, and when he grew old enough to think things out for himself, his

intelligent and questioning mind led him to reject his father's old-fashioned beliefs, his staunch Scottish ideals. Like the traditional clergyman's son, Donald sought and found new gods, a new religion. And that religion was communism—what else could it have been in the circumstances and in this period? He lived in a time of political, social, and intellectual upheaval in which the world changed more thoroughly in a few decades than it had in several centuries. And, for all his admirable qualities, Donald had not the strength of character to withstand the insidious whisperings of Marxist propagandists.

Against the undoubted advantages with which Donald faced life, he had one serious disadvantage—a particularly sensitive conscience. This caused him agonies of remorse even as a schoolboy, when his sins were nothing more than those of a schoolboy. But time did not harden that tender conscience, and gradually he developed what in psychoanalysts' jargon is called a "guilt complex," which was to some extent the cause of his subsequent breakdown. His guilt feelings became particularly acute when he had drunk too much; and then he would cry over long-dead sins, remember past guilts.

He was, however, a happy enough boy when at the age of twelve or thirteen he went off to Gresham's School, where he distinguished himself at work and at games and earned the reputation not for any particular brilliance but for being a useful all-rounder. He was very young for his age, this extremely tall, strong, but somewhat fattish and flabby

boy, good-natured, shy, and retiring. In 1931, at the age of eighteen, he won a scholarship in modern languages to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and had been up only one year when his father died. This undoubtedly had a great effect upon Donald's life. Sir Donald Maclean was the president of the Board of Education and the leader of the Liberal Party when he died, but with no pension and little money saved, he left his family in extremely straitened circumstances. Old friends came to the rescue and provided the money necessary for Donald to continue at Cambridge and to take his degree in 1935. But the relative affluence that the Macleans enjoyed when the head of the family was a cabinet minister came to an abrupt end, and this must have altered their outlook on life.

For Donald, his father's death brought two other problems of considerable importance. First, at a critical period of his life he was deprived of his father's influence, which might in the long run have been decisive. Second, as he was much the most promising of the children, the family's hopes, and particularly those of his strong-minded mother, were pinned on him. In this way he gained an unwanted position of responsibility and was also somewhat spoiled—all the available money was spent on furthering Donald's career. Gradually he came to take this privileged position rather for granted.

In the beginning, however, Donald justified his mother's belief, and in 1935, after taking his degree, he went into the Foreign Office. This period is examined more closely in Part

IV; it supplies the beginning of an answer to the formidable question: "Why did Donald go behind the Iron Curtain?"

After three years in Whitehall, Donald was posted to the British Embassy in Paris in 1938; and the following year he met Melinda. He had grown up a lot by this time and had lost a good deal of his boyishness and his boyish shyness. He was still an exuberant youth, given to wild parties and drinking orgies, but his mind was maturing and hardening, his knowledge of the world and world affairs increasing with uncanny speed, and the foundations of his reputation as *the* rising young diplomat of the day were being soundly laid. He was losing, too, his flabbiness, and improving immensely in looks, although, as a photograph shows—one of those fantastic group photographs in which the staff of the British Embassy in Paris takes on the aspect of a third-rate touring company playing Sardou's *Diplomacy*—he was still youthful and cherubic-looking.

This was the man Melinda met in the Café Flore one evening in December, 1939, when the snow lay thick on Paris: the tall, fair young Englishman who was to bring both happiness and desperate sorrow into her still unformed life. She was introduced to him by an American friend, a writer named Robert McAlmon. The first wild excitement of war had passed by December, the flurry of mobilization and the chaos of hastily organized civil defence had died away, and France had settled down to lewd and cynical comments

on the phony war. By this time the Latin Quarter, curiously unchanged by events that only very farsighted people then realized heralded the end of an epoch, had reverted to its normal state of multi-lingual ebullience. The cafés were as crowded as ever; the streets just as full. At the age of twenty-three, and alone in Paris after her sister's return home, Melinda was master of her own destinies and was determined to stay on as long as she could. As Donald stood inside the dark-curtained glass door, wiping snow from his face and hair, looking round the packed, smoky room in search of familiar faces, he noticed Melinda sitting with a group of friends. He knew her well by sight, for the Latin Quarter is a curiously small world, but somehow he had never met her. He spoke to the man who was with him, and they began to push their way through the crush, bandying greetings with nearly everyone there, for Donald too was a popular figure in the heterogeneous society of Saint-Germain-des-Prés. The two men stood by the table occupied by Melinda and her entourage and vaguely, through the babble of talk going on at top speed all around her, Melinda heard McAlmon introducing "My friend, Donald Maclean." Was she aware that this was the most significant moment of her life? It is extremely doubtful. Donald was to Melinda at that moment just another of the young men who flocked around her in those happy Paris days—even if, from that evening, he became the most important of them and was soon to eclipse all others. Within a matter of days they became inseparable—but the initiative came from Donald. He "saw

her first," as it were; he sought the introduction; he made the running; and he married her. That she liked him, enjoyed his company, admired his intelligence, his knowledge, his *savoir faire*, is undeniable. For Donald, although he spent his nights among the highly specialized habitués of the cafés and boîtes of the Latin Quarter—where art in any form took precedence over world affairs, where promise was as important as accomplishment, where talk was all—was in many respects a visitor from another world. Already he was a hard-working and extremely competent member of the British Foreign Service—and, at twenty-six, he was already climbing the ladder of which the topmost rungs were labelled "His Britannic Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary and Ambassador Extraordinary to Paris . . . to Moscow . . . to Washington." But had it not been for the war, it is highly unlikely that Melinda would have married him. Donald was part of her Paris life—for several months the major part of it—but there are indications that it was a part of her life she would in normal circumstances have been ready to leave behind her when she returned home.

Donald's obvious liking for her was reassuring to Melinda who, for all her popularity, was a little out of her depth. This un-intellectual girl was fascinated by the scope and intensity of the life around her, and she longed to be able to plunge in and swim with the others. Donald, who seemed to combine in his tall, handsome person all the qualities she felt to be lacking in herself, who was equally at home in both worlds but whose slightly mocking, slightly cynical attitude

took neither world too seriously, gave her confidence and brought out the latent admirable qualities that she possessed but that always needed a stimulus. But there is a wide gulf between liking a man's companionship and desiring to marry him—and it was a gulf Melinda did not really contemplate crossing. She indicated as much to her mother, who was also her closest friend. In a letter written soon after she had met Donald she said, "But I am not really in the least bit interested in him." This is certainly not convincing evidence, but as time went on she gave no indication that she had changed her mind. As it was, it required Hitler's blitzkrieg to bring matters to a head and force Melinda to take one of the two most vital decisions of her life. After she and Donald had known each other for nearly seven months, the German armies bypassed the Maginot Line and the war really started. With the fighting nearing Paris, American citizens could no longer put off returning home. And then Donald asked Melinda to marry him.

She was in an agony of indecision. She liked him too well for an outright refusal, and yet she could not bring herself to accept him. She desperately wanted time. Could she not go back home and think it over? No, replied Donald. If Melinda went to the United States she would not be able to return to Europe until the war was over. And, as things were then, in almost the blackest moments of the war, who dared possibly predict when that would be or what the future held? In her little hotel bedroom next door to the Café Flore, with panic rapidly rising all around her, Melinda wrestled

with her problem, wrestled alone and with no one to guide her. Finally she made her decision: she could not marry Donald. After another attempt to make her change her mind, he accepted the situation and said he would drive her to Bordeaux and put her on a boat for America. But events moved too swiftly for them. The speed of the German advance accelerated; the evacuation of Paris began; and Melinda changed her mind. On June 10, 1940, with gunfire sounding faintly in the distance, Melinda Marling and Donald Duart Maclean were married in the Mairie of the Palais Bourbon district, facing the already deserted Chamber of Deputies.

Some time before, in a letter posted on June 9—although, in typical Melinda fashion it was dated June 11—she wrote in a rather extraordinary manner to her mother, extraordinary, that is to say, for a young girl just about to marry the man she loves. It said:

Darling Mother,

Please don't feel hurt that I haven't let you know before about my decision to marry Donald. But I honestly didn't know whether to or not. We decided very suddenly because it seemed to be the only chance as the Embassy is liable to have to leave Paris for some Godforsaken little place in the country and one is no longer allowed to travel without an impossible reason. We would particularly never see each other—and as it is terribly complicated getting married here and takes almost ten days, we decided this was our last opportunity as God knows how long the war will last. Also I had decided I couldn't stand it any longer I was so homesick.

I just had to go home. So we are marrying now as otherwise I probably wouldn't be able to come for years—also I wouldn't be allowed to stay in France. All the Embassy wives have left long ago for England and their various homes. So the logical place for me to go during the war is home.

I am sorry I haven't given you more details about Donald, and I know you must be very worried and also probably disappointed at my marrying an Englishman. But that doesn't necessarily mean I will have to settle down in England for the rest of my life. We will probably be sent all over the world.

Darling, I am terribly in love with Donald and am sure there will never be anyone else. He is the only man I have ever seen I would have liked to marry. We have known each other 9 months now, so you see we are not blindly rushing into it.

The letter continued some days later, by which time the infuriating French red tape had been successfully reduced to mere strings and the marriage was imminent. Melinda speaks of a dinner at the home of a friend of Donald's who had a car:

. . . and when they leave Paris Donald and I are going with him. I will probably go straight to Bordeaux to try to get a boat. I am so thrilled I can hardly believe I will soon be seeing you. I am only bringing over two suitcases or so as it will be impossible to travel with more. The rest I am leaving in Donald's flat as they will be sent to him if he has to leave France.

The utter unreality of this letter, written after the German armies had overrun Europe and were fast approaching Paris—facts of which Melinda makes no mention at all—shows Melinda's preoccupation with her own affairs, to the complete exclusion of the outside world—a characteristic which, I think, she always retained.

The letter continued:

To go back to Donald, sweetie. He is six foot four, blond with beautiful blue eyes, altogether a beautiful man. He has all the qualities for a husband (at least, I think). He is the soul of honour, responsible, a sense of humour, intelligent, imagination, cultured, broad-minded (and sweet) etc. Of course he has faults but somehow they don't clash with mine—except that he is stubborn and strong-willed. I needed that as I was drifting along getting nowhere. My greatest desire is to have a baby while I am home as I am dying to have one and I couldn't bear to have it without you. Wouldn't it be wonderful, Mummy!

It is clear from this that Melinda had planned to marry Donald, and then, with his influence and as the wife of a British official, obtain passage to America from Bordeaux or some southern French port. But things did not work out this way. After their wedding, they took to the road in what was in effect a nightmare honeymoon. Paris was emptying fast, and the roads leading out of the capital were jammed with refugees. Donald and Melinda, with the friend in whose car they were travelling, got only as far as Chartres, and they spent their first married night in a field. The next morning they

headed west. They were living in a time of the most extraordinary uncertainty and confusion, but they still hoped it would be possible to have a few days' honeymoon before deciding upon the next move. They had thought of going to Biarritz, and indeed, after reporting to Bordeaux, where the British Embassy had established itself, they did spend two days in a village not far from Biarritz. But once again events moved ahead of them. The capitulation of France, now led by Marshal Pétain, was imminent, and, with it, the evacuation of the British Embassy. They hurried back to Bordeaux, and there, on June 23, they went on board a British destroyer that sailed in the late afternoon. Three hours later, out at sea but still within sight of France, they were transferred to a British tramp steamer returning from delivering coal to South America, and in it they made a fantastic ten-day journey to England. There was little food and practically no fresh water on board the ship, which was now crowded with refugees. Melinda shared the cook's cabin with three other women, and Donald and the men slept in the passage outside. As the ship zigzagged to and fro down the Channel in an effort, fortunately entirely successful, to avoid both bombs from Nazi aircraft and torpedoes from submarines, an extremely hungry Donald and Melinda sat on deck and remembered all the wonderful meals they had ever eaten in Paris. They arrived in London none the worse for their adventure, and it was from there that Melinda sent her mother a telegram announcing that she was now Mrs. Donald Maclean.

The first five months of Melinda's married life were spent

in wartime London, in the London of the Battle of Britain, and it was for her, a young American girl who had never before visited England, an unforgettable experience—as, of course, it was for everyone else. She was, I think, happy—“Although ever afterwards ‘love’ to me was always inextricably mixed up with ‘bombs,’ it was an experience I would not have missed,” she told me some years later.

Donald was an attentive if somewhat distraught husband, trying rather bewilderedly to apportion his time equitably between an overwhelming mass of work in the shorthanded Foreign Office and a young wife with few friends or acquaintances in a strange new country.

In November it was decided that Melinda should go to America. She was pregnant, and she and Donald both felt that as she had parents to stay with in New York it would be foolish in her condition to run the daily risks attendant upon life in London at that time. In addition, she had not seen her family for over two years, and she was homesick. She sailed in a convoy at the end of November, and after a quiet passage was welcomed with open arms by her mother and sisters on her arrival in New York. She went to stay on her mother's farm, Merriebrook, at South Egremont, Massachusetts, just outside New York State, and it was there that her baby was born dead the following April. She was grievously upset, and it might have been well if she had stayed longer in America. But she was a person of stubborn loyalties, and, despite a certain amount of pressure, she flew back to London in May—which in prevailing conditions required not only determi-

nation but also courage. She had to spend three weeks in Bermuda and another three weeks in Lisbon between planes.

The next three years were spent peacefully enough, if that adverb is applicable to wartime London. Melinda and Donald were bombed out of two flats, but although they very nearly lost their lives in the first incident, after one night in an air-raid shelter Melinda refused to take cover again. It was too awful, she said. The stench, the lack of air, the crowd of people packed into the small space, gave her claustrophobia; and she felt she would rather die in her bed than face a shelter again. When women were conscripted, Melinda worked in the Times Book Shop, where she was very successful—she was interested and efficient and, like all her family, had charming manners.

The strains and stresses of the war years in England were such that personal relationships could not be tested. If people drank too much, were irritable or neglectful, then it could be put down to the war and discounted, however much it might have been disliked. It is therefore impossible to decide exactly what terms Donald and Melinda were on in the first four years of their married life, but of her general unhappiness there is little doubt.

In 1944, however, a new stage of Melinda's life opened, for in April Donald, whose wartime work had more than borne out his early promise, was appointed acting First Secretary to the British Embassy in Washington. Melinda was overjoyed at the appointment, both because of the promotion it meant for Donald and because of the opportunity it gave

her of returning to her own country. But, as on her earlier visit, Melinda was pregnant when she arrived home. This time it should have been different, for she had her husband with her. Actually the four years in America did not begin auspiciously. After a few days in New York—where Donald met Mrs. Dunbar and Melinda's sisters for the first time and created a highly favourable impression—Donald left Melinda at her mother's house. There, except for one week, she remained until her baby was born, while Donald was in Washington. Melinda did not go to live with him there because of the difficulty in finding a suitable house or apartment. War-time Washington was impossibly overcrowded, and Donald's excuse that he could not find any place for them to live was, on the surface, plausible—but only just plausible. He himself managed quite happily to live in the apartment of one of his colleagues at the embassy, leaving Melinda to her own devices in New York. As all she had to do as the weeks went by was to await the birth of her child, it was not a particularly gay time for her. Even when Donald went to New York on his summer vacation he appeared to spend far more time in riding and swimming at the country club than in dancing attendance on Melinda.

It was, in fact, during the American years that Donald's marital irresponsibility began to manifest itself. Had he really wanted Melinda to be with him as much as she herself wished to be by his side, the embassy administration officer would certainly have found them some place to live—and there are always hotels. If it were merely a question of money, of not

being able to afford the high rents demanded, Donald could without difficulty have obtained an increase in his house allowance. He was, however, always extraordinarily casual about money, and he rarely sent any funds to Melinda the whole time she was in New York. He knew she had wealthy parents and even a little money of her own. But he also knew he was placing her in the position of having to live off her mother, which she detested.

The history of their married life right up to Donald's disappearance is full of occasions on which he left Melinda virtually stranded without money. It was not really that he was mean, nor does there seem to be any definite connection between this and the fact that he was always hard up. His curious attitude towards the financial side of his married life sprang from a deeper, "the world owes me something" outlook towards life at large, an attitude which made many people think that he was spoiled. A remark he made around this time to one of Melinda's sisters—"There's nothing I like so much as the comfortable houses of my rich friends"—is surely in line with that outlook.

For the moment, however, the major tragedy was still nearly seven years ahead and Donald and Melinda were living the minor tragedy of a marriage that was not running smoothly. On September 22, 1944, Melinda went into the hospital, where by a Caesarean operation her child, Donald Fergus, was born the following day. She and her husband were delighted, and Donald went back to Washington, where he eventually found an apartment. He returned to New York

in the middle of December and took Melinda and the baby back to Washington two days before Christmas. They lived there for three and a half years, visiting New York and the seashore on holidays.

It was a curious, mixed period in their lives. When Melinda arrived in Washington at the end of 1944, the American war effort was at its height; and the war remained the major pre-occupation of everyone in the overcrowded capital during the next twelve months, although hostilities came to an end with the dropping of the atomic bomb in August 1945.

Conditions moved slowly towards normal, but even by the middle of 1948, when the Macleans left America, Washington was still a sort of boom town, with living conditions remarkably difficult and the tempo of life speeded up beyond recognition. The British Embassy in 1945, swollen by the addition of all kinds of offshoots from the purely diplomatic branch—information, propaganda, cultural—which hardly existed before the war, was still understaffed and overworked, and Donald was always extremely busy. The rising young diplomat was rapidly making a name for himself, and from acting First Secretary he became acting Counsellor and head of Chancery.

It might have been imagined that back in her own country Melinda would have been happier and more serene than she had been in alien England. In fact, she was not. She was already a cosmopolite at heart, and although Washington, with its foreign embassies and legations, afforded opportunities of contact with people from all over the world, it was by no

means the same thing as living abroad. One has the impression that Melinda found life in Washington intensely overpowering, that she lived at a pace that left her breathless. Certainly she was more shy than ever during this period, shy to the extent that if Donald had invited only two friends in to dinner he would not tell Melinda until they were actually there. And yet, when she was driven to it, she could be a good hostess; and on occasions during their time in Washington, in the absence of wives higher up on the diplomatic list, she was hostess at embassy parties.

The Macleans' actual conditions of living in Washington were not the happiest. The first apartment Donald found was admirable, but when the owner wanted it back, Donald immediately agreed, although had he wanted to be "tough," they could easily have stayed on. The next apartment was far less pleasant. Also, there was servant trouble. Melinda seemed quite incapable of handling this problem, and twice Mrs. Dunbar—who had divorced her second husband, Hal Dunbar, in 1945—had to fly down from New York to get rid of nurses whom neither Melinda nor Donald could bring themselves to dismiss, although they disliked the nurses intensely. Donald, possibly through sheer inertia, appeared to prefer even a servant he disliked to the trouble of making a change, and Melinda followed his lead. It was a most curious household, and yet a very popular one; and the Macleans made many friends.

But in their own intimate lives they were already far from happy. In June, 1946, Melinda again went to New York, and

there, on July 27, her next child, Donald Marling, was born. After another two years in Washington, Donald was appointed to the embassy at Cairo. They sailed for England at the beginning of September, 1948, for home leave before going on to their new post—and the next and supremely important stage in their life together.

It was in London that I met them first. I was on leave from the Middle East, soon to return to Beirut, which I was trying to make my base at that time, owing to the infuriating difficulties of working in Cairo. One night my wife Clare and I were invited to dine at the house of Bernard Burroughs, then head of the Southern Department of the Foreign Office—the department that, despite its name, deals with the Middle East—principally to meet Donald and Melinda. It was a party of twelve people, and we all knew one another, were almost old friends—except Melinda. At dinner I sat next to this delicate-complexioned, soft-voiced little American girl and sensed that in this Christian-name gathering of people who had been in or had had some connection with or special interest in the Middle East, Melinda felt herself rather out of her depth. She was thrilled at the thought of going to Cairo, and I told her all I could about that large, dusty, perversely attractive city. I found her utterly charming, and possessing the kind of fragility and defencelessness that made nearly all men feel they wanted to protect her, although against what one had no idea.

After dinner Melinda, Donald, and I sat together and continued to talk about Egypt. Although Donald showed no

marked enthusiasm, I felt that he too was pleased with his new appointment. They seemed a harmonious couple, and later Clare and I expressed our happiness at the thought that we had made two extremely pleasant new friends. Our farewell to them had been, "See you soon in Cairo."

Soon after this Donald and Melinda went off to Cairo, while Clare and I returned to Beirut. It was not until the following March that I arrived in Cairo, where, with intervals of varying length, I had spent a good deal of my adult life. One of the local newspapers thought fit to publish an announcement of my return in its social column, giving the name of the hotel at which I was staying. The morning the notice appeared I received a message from Melinda, welcoming me to Cairo and inviting me to cocktails that evening.

The Macleans were living in Sharia Ibn Zanki in one of the delightful houses originally built for senior British officials of the Egyptian government, which has now been taken over by the British Embassy for the housing of their higher-ranking staff. It was a large, three-storied house with an extremely pleasant garden, furnished and kept up by the Office of Works; a staff of four excellent Berberine servants and an English governess for the children helped to make life in Cairo smooth-running and pleasant for the Macleans.

I went there at cocktail time, curious to discover how Melinda was getting on in Cairo. Physically, Gezireh, the European residential district where they lived, was attractive. The wide, quiet streets were lined with beautiful flowering trees—delicate mauve jacaranda, bursting orange and scarlet

flame trees, woolly yellow mimosa, and, all over walls and hedges, deep purple and rusty red bougainvillæa. The houses had a certain dignity and spaciousness, and their gardens, in which green-fingered Egyptian gardeners produced an extraordinary profusion of common and exotic flowers and plants, were cool and fresh oases in the prevailing dusty heat. Many of the old houses were, however, being torn down, and their places were noisily being filled with enormous blocks of modern flats directly any rapacious Egyptian landlord obtained possession. According to European and, particularly, American standards, life was reasonably cheap, calm, and easy. There was, however, a definite but indefinable atmosphere of evil hanging over Cairo, which is, has always been, and probably always will be, a bad town in a bad country with a baneful influence upon foreigners. So many lives have been ruined in Egypt, so many promising careers wrecked.

I found Melinda on top of the world. She still adored Cairo, was delighted with her life, had made dozens of friends, and had probably for the first time in her married life emerged from her protective shell. Donald, after about six months in Egypt, was doing exceptionally well at the embassy, and he too appeared at this time to be enjoying his new post. It was an excellent party, and I went back to my hotel marvelling at the change Cairo had wrought in Melinda. She was as charming as ever, but I no longer felt any great need to protect her!

Soon after this meeting, my wife joined me in Cairo, and

some friends of ours at the embassy lent us their house, which was only a few doors away from the one occupied by the Macleans. We met them frequently at the endless round of Cairo parties, and on the unfortunately rare evenings when none of us had an engagement we would dine together and play family bridge. At this stage of their lives we got to know them well, and our liking for them increased.

It soon became clear that Donald was developing a deep antipathy for Egypt. He disliked the intense social life and the feeling of imprisonment given by a city from which there seemed little escape, and the contrast between the quite shocking poverty of ninety-five per cent of the population and the arrogant, ostentatious wealth of the small, ruling-class minority outraged his liberal principles. The work of a British diplomat was complicated by the difficulties raised daily by a corrupt and inefficient Egyptian government, which sought in the still-unresolved "Palestine War" a means of distracting attention from its own extraordinary shortcomings and tried to deflect onto the British a public unpopularity which should have been its own. In the background all the time was the king, maintaining his position by the traditional practice of Egyptian monarchs of playing the British off against the Wafd (the nationalist party). British policy at that period was also the traditional one of doing nothing, of sitting back and seeing what would happen, of "non-interference." This policy was tainted by the fact that British diplomatic influence and the presence of our troops in the Canal Zone constituted at least a passive interference.

Donald objected strongly to this policy. He felt that as we could not escape from the predominant position in Egypt that our previous status there had given us, we should accept our responsibilities and try to persuade the rulers of Egypt to institute the reforms that alone, in his opinion, could save the country from communism. And, except to stress its dangers, that was all I ever heard Donald say about communism.

A picture of him at that time would show a tall, fair, rather carelessly dressed man of thirty-six, slightly remote, a little too restrained, sitting low in an armchair, with one lanky leg crossed over the other and his free foot constantly jerking up and down, commenting with cynical humour on the stupidity and obtuseness of most of his fellows. His relations with Melinda appeared entirely amicable, if slightly condescending, slightly mocking; for she clearly took no interest in and had no knowledge of the political and social problems that we discussed in the intervals between hands of bridge, which they both played with a rather intense inefficiency.

Melinda was on the whole gay and unconcerned by Donald's mockery. She had acquired a new self-confidence to replace her former shyness and diffidence. How far she had come, this little American girl who only two or three years before, in her native Washington, had to be surprised or cajoled into receiving two or three guests, was shown about this time when she entertained the Duke of Edinburgh. He was on a visit to Cairo and was staying for some days at the British Embassy. It was felt that something might be done to relieve the tedium of a succession of heavy official entertain-

ments, and Melinda was asked at short notice to organize a "young-people's party" for him. It took place at the Macleans' house in Gezireh, with Melinda as hostess. Twelve members of Cairo's younger set were invited to dine with the duke, and other guests came in afterwards. They played slightly juvenile games, such as "murders," and the party was a huge success.

At the end of the summer I left Cairo again. When I got back the following February I heard rather odd stories about Donald. His antipathy to his life in Egypt was increasing to such an extent, it was said, that he had begun to drink too much. There had so far been no scandal, and, at any rate officially, the embassy knew nothing about it, but his friends were alarmed. It would be ridiculous to call the Donald of those days an habitual drunkard: I never saw him anything but reasonably sober. But from time to time during his life he had been known to seek refuge from problems that were too much for him in a spell of reckless drinking. It would then seem as if only alcohol could bring relief from hidden terrors and fears, and, if it did not solve anything, at least it would drive away doubts. This is the accepted explanation of occasional bouts of heavy drinking by sensitive, intelligent people who do not as a rule drink heavily. It is, in Donald's case, an explanation that might have been true in the later stages of his Foreign Service career. But did it really hold good when he was quite a young man? For Donald's drinking began early. There is a letter to Donald in Paris from Melinda, who

was on a holiday in the south of France in 1940 before they were married, in which she writes:

If you do feel an urge to have a drinking orgy, why don't you have it at home—so at least you will be able to get safely to bed? Anyway, do try to keep young P. from completely demolishing your apartment.

Some five or six years later, when Donald was at the embassy in Washington, he wrote to Melinda, who was staying with her mother in New York:

I scarcely get drunk at all, although you are not here to remind me of the morrow's sorrows. I think it must be because we drink so much whisky every day anyway that it don't signify to have a few extra; also, it disappears in sweat.

There is nothing terribly serious in these two examples. Young men in their early twenties living in the hectic atmosphere of prewar Paris quite frequently indulged deliberately in drinking orgies; it was a part of their growing pains; they were purchasing experience. Similarly wartime Washington, where the dry martini and the whisky highball were staple items of diet for thousands of overworked men and women, was not a place where indulgence in a "few extra" would necessarily brand anyone as an inveterate drunkard. But they were pointers to a definite, inherent weakness in Donald, who could not physically or mentally afford to let himself go in this direction.

I left Cairo again at the beginning of March, and by the

time I returned at the beginning of May the end of Donald's career in Egypt was within sight. His drinking had increased in frequency and ferocity. There had already been two incidents of which a certain number of people knew and several very unpleasant domestic and more private scenes.

The first incident was, as it happened, relatively unimportant. After two cocktail parties, Donald, instead of going home, had wandered off on some solitary search for oblivion and had been found shoeless, in a drunken stupor, on a bench in the Esbekieh Gardens—not a place or a position in which an Egyptian servant would expect to find an Englishman, and particularly not one who, as the papers he showed to a policeman indicated, was a member of the diplomatic corps.

The second incident was far more serious. At the beginning of March Melinda's sister Harriet had come out to Cairo to stay with them. One evening Melinda, possibly to show her sister another part of Cairo life, organized a kind of surprise party to go to call on some friends who had a house on the banks of the Nile at Helouan, some fifteen miles from Cairo. She hired a felucca—the picturesque but sluggish wide-sailed Nile boat—in which eight of them plus the boatmen set sail for Helouan. There was a little food on board, for they expected to have dinner with their friends, but quite a lot of drink that Melinda had undertaken to provide. All might have gone well had it not been for the wind, which dropped completely; and the felucca drifted with painful slowness against the current. Instead of taking about two hours, the trip eventually required nearly eight, and by the

time they reached Helouan Donald was dangerously drunk, indeed rather terrifyingly so. For under the influence of alcohol Donald—a man of exceptional physical strength—lost his gentleness and became a frightening menace to everyone, including himself. When at one point they landed to see where they were, Donald in a fit of mad rage seized Melinda round the neck and might have strangled her had the others not intervened. Then when they eventually reached Helouan, around two A.M. instead of between eight and nine as they had planned, came an incident that in a distorted form has already had a certain amount of publicity.

On duty along the river bank was a *ghaffir*—a kind of armed night watchman, not usually of what one might call a high degree of intelligence. Alarmed by the sudden appearance from the river of a crowd of rather noisy foreigners, the *ghaffir* challenged them with his antiquated but certainly loaded rifle. Donald sprang at him, wrested the rifle from the *ghaffir*'s hands, and began to swing it wildly round his own head, threatening, if only in a kind of drunken fun, to smash the *ghaffir*'s skull. Another member of the party, also a Secretary at the embassy, tried to restrain Donald and to take the weapon from him. Donald refused to give it up, and the two men struggled for it. They slipped and rolled down the bank onto a rudimentary wooden jetty, where they landed, with Donald on top and the rifle between them. The other man broke his leg.

Transporting the injured man—who was in great pain—back to Cairo provided a difficult problem, for the friends

upon whom they had intended to call refused to open the door to them—possibly they were understandably annoyed at being awakened at that hour of the morning, and they presumably did not believe the somewhat incoherent story they were told of a man with a broken leg. A car was eventually found, and the party arrived back in Cairo not so very long before Donald had to present himself at the embassy. What story was told there is not known. Presumably a plain tale of an accident was accepted and no questions were asked. For the extraordinary feature of this escapade is that it seemed to do no harm to Donald's career. And this is true also of the final episode, the culminating incident in Donald's eighteen months' tour of office as Counsellor and head of Chancery.

It occurred nearly two months later.

By this time Donald had a writer friend of his earlier days staying with him, an uninvited and unwanted guest so far as Melinda was concerned, who became his drinking companion. On the evening of Monday, May 8, the Macleans and their two guests were invited to a cocktail party and later to an evening party. All four went to the cocktail party, but afterwards Melinda, who was again pregnant (she later had a miscarriage), went back to bed, the friend went off to an engagement of his own, and Donald and Harriet went on to the other party. By midnight Donald was getting drunk, and Harriet was bored, so she went home alone, leaving Donald at the party. Around two A.M. Donald returned home, woke up his friend, who had come in earlier and gone to bed; and

they went off together in search of amusement. They visited a cabaret or two, and then, just as dawn was breaking, knocked violently on the door of a flat in a large apartment house occupied by another member of the embassy. Much against his will, the man let them in, and they demanded drinks. Eventually, realizing there was little more he could do, he found them a bottle of whisky and returned to bed. When he got up the next morning, they were still there, very drunk, so he left them and went off to the embassy.

Sometime during the day Donald and his friend sobered up just sufficiently to remember that a girl who worked as a librarian at the American Embassy, whom they had met at a party a few days before, had a flat in the same building. As there was no more liquor left in the flat they were then occupying, they staggered up the stairs, knocked at the door, pushed their way past the astonished *suffragi*, and took possession of the empty apartment. They helped themselves to any liquor they could find and then proceeded to break up the furniture. They pushed a lot of the girl's clothes down the lavatory, smashed a table, and knocked into the bathtub a heavy slab of marble fixed as a shelf over a radiator, thus breaking the bathtub. Content with their work, they returned to Donald's colleague's flat, collapsed on a bed, and again fell asleep.

There Melinda found them in the early evening after various telephone calls had established where they were. With Harriet's help, she half-carried, half-dragged a completely

sodden Donald down the stairs and into their car and drove him home. Harriet then went back, and with the help of the suffragi removed the friend and took him home too.

The next morning Melinda and Donald had a heart-to-heart talk, after which, with a loyalty that even his outrageous behaviour had not shaken, she went to see his ambassador. She told him that Donald was ill, was suffering from a nervous breakdown, and must be given sick leave so he could return to London to see his own doctor at once. This permission was immediately given.

In the early morning of Friday, May 11, I drove out to Farouk Field on my way back to England. I had reached Cairo a few days before this, after ten weeks in Pakistan, had been very busy writing, had gone out little, and had no knowledge of the events I have just described. At the airport I met Donald and found he was going on the same plane. A rather strained and unhappy Melinda, with Harriet and the British minister, was there to see him off. I asked Donald why he was flying to London, and he replied merely that he was going home on private business for a few days. We sat opposite each other in the half-empty airliner for what turned out to be a whole day's journey. (We had to get out of the plane because of some minor mechanical trouble and wait in Cairo for two hours.) We talked in the desultory manner one does in airplanes, had a meal together at Rome, and reached London that evening.

Although I knew Donald fairly well by then, I noticed nothing wrong with him in any way except possibly that he

was rather more silent than usual. He had none of the external signs of a person suffering from a severe nervous breakdown. I never saw him again.

The next evening, from his mother's house in Kensington, Donald wrote Melinda the following letter, which I quote *in extenso* as it seems to me to throw a vivid light upon Donald's outlook at that time:

Dear Lin,

I got in late last night after a good trip. . . . I sent you a telegram this morning which I hope reached its objective alright. I am tucked away in the womb very comfortably . . .

I lunched with George Middleton [then head of the F.O. Personnel Department] today and told him the score. He was very understanding and has fixed for me to see a Dr. Wilson tomorrow morning, who is said to be a leading psychiatrist and who the F.O. employ as a consultant when their employees' psyches miss a beat. I still have my lid off and I am prepared therefore to ask help; if he says I need more exercise I shall go round the corner to . . . [first name of a woman psychoanalyst] (Harley to Wimpole—not far). I see no point in resisting George's offer to start me on this path anyhow; but also if it looks like being what I need I should get an analysis for nothing; but I promise to be expensive and go to . . . or elsewhere if it don't look any good. Anyhow George has been extremely decent and I am very grateful to him and still [more] to Andrew at his end . . .

I am grateful to you my sweet for taking all you have had

May 12.

Dear Lin,
 I got in late last night after a
 good trip. I was lucky enough to
 have George's home opposite me so
 there was nice company when needed.
 I sent you a telegram this morning which
 I hoped reached its destination alright.
 I am tucked away in the womb
 very comfortably - only shaken at present
 by Alan, Nancy having just set off
 for Beirut & Andy being away on
 a tour in his capacity as a
 Communist agent.

I lunchted with George Middleton
 today & told him the same. He
 is a very understanding and has
 fixed for me to see a Dr. Wilson
 tomorrow morning, who is said to be
 a leading gay psychiatrist and who has
 no employ as a consultant when
 his employees' psychos miss a beat.

I am still have my lid off
 & I am prepared to ask for
 ask help; if L. says I need
 more exercise & I shall go round
 to come to Emma (from Harley to
 Wimpole - not far). I see no
 point in visiting George's office to
 start me on his path any how; but
~~particularly~~ ^{also} if it looks like ~~the~~
 being what I need I shall get
 an analysis for nothing; but I
 promise to be expensive & go to
 Emma & elsewhere if it don't look
 any good. Anyhow George has been
 extremely decent & I am very grateful
 to him & still to Andrew at his
 end (I posted his parcel).

I am ^① ~~also~~ grateful to you my
 sweet for ~~all~~ ^{what} you have had to
 put up with without having me. I
 am still rather lost, but cling to her

to put up with without hating me. I am still rather lost, but cling to the idea that you do want me to be cured and come back. I am leary of making promises of being a better husband, since past ones have all been broken; but perhaps if some technician will strengthen my gasket and enlarge my heart I could make a promise which would stick. Anyhow you have been very sweet to me and I will try to give you something in return. I was overwhelmed with sadness at leaving the boys; I suppose it affects one particularly because they expect one to be there and have no means of understanding why one goes away; it is, however, I suppose bathetic rather than pathetic so long as they are happy; I know you will keep them so. I hate having left you with all the responsibility for the house, family, car, servants; and long to hear that you are managing all right. Please say a special word of thanks to Harry [Harriet] for me if this reaches you in time. She was so kind when she had much reason not to be and I shall try never to forget her sweetness any more than I shall forget yours.

I saw the Italian film about the bicycle thief today. It was very good, but too sad for you my chickabid!

I will try to keep you posted. I think very much of you my darling, miss you badly and love you. Don't feel sad about me as I will come back a better person and we can be happy together again I am sure.

D.

Two days later Donald wrote again to tell Melinda about his examination by the Foreign Office consultant. "Dr. Wilson, to whom I explained my troubles, was very nice and

understanding, but wants to give me a full physical as well as psychical examination as a first move."

In fact, the doctor wanted Donald to go into a clinic "for no specified period for tests of all kinds," which, presuming that Donald had had or was on the verge of having a nervous breakdown or had at least gone to the doctor for that reason, was an eminently sensible course.

But Donald did not want that. "At the moment of writing, I do not feel that I can face going into a clinic; fear plays a leading part in my resistance, but I also much doubt that there is any point in it." So he decided to seek the opinion of a psychoanalyst to whom he had been recommended. "If she says I ought to go into the clinic, I suppose I may, but I am not sure. I shall try to get her to say that she will treat me by analysis, which is what I came here for."

And, as so often happened, Donald obtained his own way: he did not go into a clinic, and he was treated "by analysis." The treatment was spread thinly over the six-months' sick leave he was granted by the Foreign Office, and he found it on the whole quite enjoyable. How effective it was, the future was to show. Presumably on the insistence of Dr. Wilson, he did have a full medical examination, for on June 7 he wrote to tell Melinda that he had had his physical tests at the Maida Vale Hospital, including the encephalogram. "The result was as we expected entirely negative."

In Cairo Melinda was having a difficult time. Donald had left her with all the responsibilities of a large house and a small family but with no money to meet them. She was also

in a state of utter uncertainty concerning the future. It seems clear that at this time she still expected Donald to return to Egypt, but there must have been doubts even in her loyal mind, and it is probable that deep inside her she was facing the prospect that the life in Cairo she liked so much was coming to an end. For the moment she could parry embarrassing questions about Donald's sudden flight to England by vague talk of his "breakdown." Except to a few intimate friends, this could have carried but little conviction, for outwardly there had been nothing to show that Donald was a sick man.

Before long, however, the story of his most recent escape was going the rounds. It reached a widely circulated Egyptian weekly, which seized upon it eagerly as ammunition in the anti-British campaign it was then waging, and it published a full if somewhat embroidered version, which was taken up in other publications. But there was no official reaction. Everybody at the embassy was being pleasant and reassuring, and as far as Melinda could tell the future was entirely a personal matter between herself and Donald.

Immediate difficulties were somewhat lessened by the arrival on June 1 of Mrs. Dunbar. One problem demanded a rapid solution. Like all the other embassy families who were not going home on leave that summer, the Macleans had rented a house in Alexandria, to which they were due to move at the beginning of July. Donald's letters gave no clear indication what his plans or movements were likely to be; the embassy could give no advice. Should Melinda cancel the

lease or not? (In parenthesis, a curious sidelight on the legendary Egyptian grapevine—by which servants are supposed to know of their masters' movements long before the masters themselves do—was provided by Melinda's servants. When Mrs. Dunbar arrived at the house in Sharia Ibn Zanki she found the usually excellent servants slack, dirty, and slightly insolent; they knew that the "master" had gone and they knew already that he was never coming back.) At last Melinda and her mother decided that, whatever happened later, they would give up the Alexandria house and go abroad for the summer. Then, if Donald was reposted to Cairo after his sick leave, they could all return in the autumn. Mrs. Dunbar paid the various outstanding bills, personal belongings were packed and stored, and on June 18 Melinda, the children, and Mrs. Dunbar sailed from Alexandria for Spain.

Donald and Melinda corresponded irregularly, but Donald's letters remained vague, and there was no real indication of how successful his cure was proving. During the first two months he appeared to be leading a quiet, retired life, but gradually he emerged from his semi-retirement and began to see his friends again; and he was again drinking heavily. Little of this appeared in his letters to Melinda, but friends of his have been quoted as saying that during the summer of 1950 Donald's appearance was "frightening."

Cyril Connolly in his book *The Missing Diplomats* writes:

He had lost his serenity, his hands would tremble, his face was usually a livid yellow, and he looked as if he had spent the night sitting up in a tunnel. . . . Though he remained

detached and amiable as ever, it was clear to us that he was miserable and in a very bad way. In conversation a kind of shutter would fall, as if he had returned to some basic and incommunicable anxiety.

It is clear from this description that Donald's physical and mental condition had deteriorated since his arrival in London. As I have pointed out, there was nothing obviously wrong with him when we flew home together, and no one in Cairo in the weeks or even days preceding his departure had noticed anything more than his excessive drinking, with its inevitable aftermaths of a certain unaccustomed irritability and neglect of his work. Whatever his seniors may have said about the excellence of his work, his subordinates had noticed a change. They saw that the minutes and the memoranda and the files that are the life blood of the Foreign Service tended to accumulate on Donald's desk instead of flowing freely as they had done during the time when he was making his reputation.

It might have been thought that Donald, who was after all on leave in England, would have joined his family in Spain if only for a few weeks or even days. He did not do so. But early in September, when they had been apart for nearly four months, Melinda received a most curious letter from him. He seemed desperately discouraged about himself, and he said that he did not see why she should ever return to him, that he would probably never be either a good husband or a good father, and that after the way he had behaved he felt that

Melinda and the children would be better off without him.

On receipt of this letter, Melinda decided to end her Spanish holiday. She took her mother and the children to Paris and flew over to London to see Donald.

The talks she had in England with Donald, with some of his relatives, and with the psychiatrist who had been and was still treating him, were probably the most momentous Melinda had ever had, for they again changed the course of her life. It is by no means certain that Melinda had intended to leave Donald, but it is likely that this would have happened, for at this time Donald too appeared to want them to part. Melinda loved Donald—of that there is no doubt—but the experience of ten years of married life with him had amply demonstrated that, with a person as divided as was Donald, love was an insufficient foundation for happiness. Melinda was not nearly as intelligent as Donald, but she had far more common sense, and she was in addition perceptive and intuitive. As does everybody else, she made mistakes about herself and her life, but she was acutely aware that she was making them, even if she lacked the strength of character to hold back in time. The position as it was put to her in London, not so much by Donald as by people speaking on his behalf, was that she was absolutely necessary to him, that without her he would go to pieces, lose his job with the Foreign Office, and be completely lost. She was asked to and advised to resume ordinary married life with him. After heart-searchings as acute as those she had experienced in

Paris just over ten years before, and probably with equal misgivings, Melinda agreed.

Donald for his part also had a grave decision to make: did he wish to resume life with Melinda? After his fashion, he loved her and was dependent on her; and he probably felt that he was safer with her than on his own, that she was his one reliable link with a respectable and reasonable life. They spent a fortnight together in London before he decided that they would live together again.

Melinda returned to Paris to fetch the children. While she was there she wrote to Harriet in New York:

Donald had grave doubts at first about our ability to be happy together but we decided to try it again. To me it was the only decision to take on account of the children, and I think Donald has already benefited tremendously. He realizes many things which he never allowed himself to think before. We have both, alas, developed in opposite directions. I have become more extroverted and enjoy gayer and simpler people, but Donald will have none of that at all. However if we are frank and above all don't repress our feelings perhaps we will work something out. He is going back to the F.O. on November 1—poor lamb!

Melinda had consulted the psychiatrist who was still treating Donald. Exactly what the report was is now difficult to discover, for Melinda gave two extremely different versions—one: that a normal married life could be Donald's salvation, the other: that he was a confirmed alcoholic and she should divorce him! But in an undated letter obviously written soon²

after she and Donald were living together again, Melinda wrote to Harriet:

. . . Donald is still pretty confused and vague about himself and his desires but I think when he gets settled he will find a new security and peace I hope so— He hasn't had any drinking bouts since I have been back but I can see that the root of the trouble is still not cleared away. He is still going to R. however and is definitely better. She is still baffled a bit at the homosexual side which comes out when he is drunk and I think slight hostility in general to women . . .

They decided they would live in the country, near enough to London for Donald to go up and down to the Foreign Office each day but far enough away so that if he were to reach home in reasonable time for dinner there could be no loitering in bars. He had already told the Foreign Office that he did not wish to go abroad again for some time but would prefer a post in London, and his terms had been agreed to. He had accepted the position of head of the American Division, which involved practically no social duties—so they would have no official entertaining to do and there would be no need to attend cocktail parties and similar inducements to drink too much.

After Melinda arrived in England she and Donald lived in a hotel at Sevenoaks while they looked round for a suitable house. They had not found one by the beginning of November—when Donald went back to work after an interval of six months—and it was not until five days before Christmas,

4

Yearnings and appetites
which I see no hope
for in my present life.
However perhaps this
life will really be
more rewarding in the
end and maybe I
can leave some of
my new thoughts in it.
Donald is still
rather confused and
vague about himself
and his desires now.
I think when he is set-
tled - He will find
a new security and
peace I hope so.
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I have been back.
 Oh. I can see that
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 going to R. H. H. H.
 and is definitely
 better. She is still
 baffled. The homosexual
 side which comes out
 when he is drunk and
 I think slight hostility
 in general to women -
 well darling this
 is a lot better. He
 and not the word better -
 yet. The day I can
 address a letter to
 my sheers. I will be
 very happy -

1950, that they eventually moved into Beaconsshaw and took up the life there that we have already seen in Part I. It was a difficult life for Melinda, with the large house to run, the two little boys so often ill, and Melinda pregnant again. But Donald was helping. Indeed, the first two or three months at Beaconsshaw were among the happiest in Melinda's married life.

By the spring, however, Donald's reversion to the old ways had begun—the missed trains and evenings in town, the irresponsibility and uncertainty. Around this time the friend who had been staying with the Macleans in Cairo returned to London, and soon he and Donald were in a scene together in a London dance club to which the police had to be called. At the beginning of May Guy Burgess was sent back in disgrace from the British Embassy at Washington, but no one seems to remember having seen him with Donald. Their meetings, if they did meet—and in view of what was so soon to happen it is reasonable to assume that they were at least in some kind of contact with each other—must have been casual or secret.

Early in May Harriet and her husband, Jay Sheers, came over from Paris to spend a few days, and it was during this week-end that Donald revealed to some extent what he was thinking and feeling. Harriet had always been one of his closest friends, and he had at various times talked extremely freely to her about himself and his troubles. She had not seen him for any length of time since, in Cairo, she had gone with Melinda to see him off to London, although he and Melinda had been at her wedding in Paris in January, 1951. Harriet immediately noticed a great change in Donald; he was tense,

strained, and, she thought, really desperately worried. Some of these undertones were reflected in an extraordinary conversation he had with her and also with her husband, whom, except for a short time at the wedding, he had never met before. First Donald openly supported communism, and although he did not actually say so in as many words, suggested that he was a Communist. In all the long talks they had had in America and in Egypt Harriet had never before heard Donald make more than a passing reference to communism. She did not at the time take his Tatsfield outburst seriously—in the past Donald had frequently teased her, pulled her leg, and she felt he might be doing so again. But a little later this conversation clearly took on a new importance. One day Donald took Jay Sheers to have a drink in the local pub. There he railed bitterly at his life and his job; he mocked at himself as a sheep among hordes of other sheep, going off to London every day with his black hat and neat black suit and little black briefcase; and he said that he was sick of it all and longed desperately to “cut adrift.”

These conversations are extraordinarily interesting and important, for they may reveal what was really in Donald's mind at this time. He may possibly have felt that he could safely unburden himself of these torturing ideas and desires to Harriet and Jay, who had no connection with his official life. If they talked at all, they would do so only inside the harmless circle of the family; there was little danger of anything he said getting back to the Foreign Office. The conversations also provide evidence of a substantial change in

Donald; they are a concrete example of unusual behaviour on his part *unassociated with drink*. Harriet, who had known Donald well over a period of years, was seeing him with new eyes after an interval of twelve months; she was quick to notice differences that would not be apparent to people who saw him every day or at quite short intervals. And she was alarmed and shocked.

Had Melinda noticed anything? Apart from the fact that poor Melinda had been having a wretched time with her pregnancy, her sick children, and the difficulties of life at Beaconsshaw, she was too close to Donald to notice. "How thin you've grown!" "How fat you are!" "How ill you look." "You're looking well"—who remarks upon these changes? The husband or the wife? The constant companion? Not at all. The friend who had not seen one for some time. Except in a few particular cases, physical, mental, or spiritual changes occur slowly and the degree of daily change is usually imperceptible. Therefore only if one can be examined at fairly long intervals can changes be noticed. The story of Donald and Melinda Maclean contains several instances of people blaming themselves bitterly for failing to notice or to appreciate small occurrences, unexpected remarks, curious questions that, had they been given their full value, might well have saved a lot of trouble and unhappiness. "I must have been blind," they cry. "It was happening under my nose!" And that is precisely why they had not noticed: it's the old story of the wood and the trees.

The day after Donald's outburst, he seemed his normal self

again, and his remarks of the previous night were forgotten. Harriet and Jay returned to Paris; life went on as usual at Tatsfield—on the surface, at least—and in London Donald was impressing some of his friends with an unaccustomed serenity as he went through the daily routine of work at his Foreign Office desk, luncheon parties, and even occasional drunken evenings. Others, however, and they included colleagues, were alarmed by the steady increase in his drinking. He would frequently arrive at the Foreign Office punctually at ten A.M. but too shaken to concentrate on his work without a deep drink from a bottle of whisky he kept in his desk. Often during this period he would arrive completely drunk at cocktail parties and similar functions.

But the end was now very near, and on May 25, on the evening of his thirty-eighth birthday, Donald Maclean disappeared.

PART THREE

THE SECOND DISAPPEARANCE

In the middle of September, 1951, ten weeks after Donald's disappearance and just as Melinda returned from her holiday in the south of France, Francis Marling, Melinda's father, arrived in London. He had flown over from New York to see if there was anything he could do to speed up the inquiry into his son-in-law's disappearance, or at least to obtain fuller information than that contained in the highly uninformative official statements. He had introductions to the Foreign Office from friends in the State Department, but they were of little use to him. There was nothing to be discovered, nothing anyone could tell him, and he returned to New York—where he died the following spring—with a distinctly poor opinion of the British in general and the average Foreign Office official in particular. He felt then, as other people were

to feel later, that no serious effort was being made to trace the missing men.

Enterprising newspaper reporters were still "discovering" Burgess and Maclean in various odd places, ranging from Perth to Prague, Nottingham (The Albert Hotel) to Naples, but the wildness and irresponsibility of their stories quickly defeated their intentions, and no one took the slightest notice of them. Officially there was no news at all; right until the time when she too disappeared, Melinda was told absolutely nothing either by the Foreign Office or by the people more directly concerned with the investigations. Everything she knew, every new piece of information she obtained—except the one vital fact which, unfortunately for her, and for reasons we still cannot fathom, she kept to herself—she immediately passed on to the authorities; but there was no reciprocity.

As it is practically certain that to this day M.I. 5 and the Foreign Office know little more than they did in mid-June, 1951, it is not surprising that they could tell Melinda nothing. But it would not have endangered their investigation, and it would have been something of a comfort for Melinda, if they could at least have kept her negatively informed, if they had told her of the various clues they had followed that had led nowhere, of the suspected identifications investigated and found worthless. After all, she *was* Donald's wife, and he was missing, and at that time, as Foreign Office spokesmen insisted when it suited them, there was nothing

more against Donald than the charge that he had been absent without leave.

Melinda was still in a state of utter bewilderment. At the end of October she wrote to her sister Harriet:

Life goes on and gradually a pattern seems to emerge out of the swamp. Oh, I can't tell you how completely shipwrecked I feel. Like a drowning man my past seems to rise up and confront me and I couldn't be more horrified. I made the fatal mistake of reading old letters (1939 ones)—not Donald's—and as far as I can see I never never wrote and answered any of them and altogether behaved so bitchily or unconsciously it isn't true. I can't tell you how shocked I am. I feel like writing to them all now and saying please forgive me for not having answered your letter before, I would like to meet you for dinner when you come to Paris, etc. Wouldn't they all be shocked out of their wits?—as would their respective wives and offspring. If I had ever learned to answer letters perhaps I would be among the ranks (of the wives I mean). Don't despair. I haven't gotten as far as that yet, nor have I lost a particle of faith in Donald but, oh God, why is life quite so difficult?

Christmas came, the first Christmas without Donald, and then the New Year. It was about this time that Melinda began definitely to accept the fact that Donald would not return. The months of suspense were changing into no less unhappy months of uncertainty. What should she do for the best? She could not make up her mind. She remained constantly loyal to Donald, as far as the outside world was con-

cerned, but did she still love him? Later events seem to prove that Melinda never really stopped loving Donald entirely, but there is no doubt that from early 1952 onwards she often said she no longer loved him, and undoubtedly at the time she thought this was the case.

In the spring she spent three weeks in a London hospital, where she underwent a minor operation, and there she talked freely to one of the doctors. He had formed the habit of going in to see her each evening, at first to help her through the tedium of hospital nights and later because he became interested in his tragic patient, who was so nervous that her hands shook like wind-tossed leaves. To this doctor Melinda told me later she had admitted openly that she was no longer in love with Donald and intended to divorce him to try to remake her life.

About this time both Clare and I saw Melinda several times, together and separately, and we were left in no doubt at all that she had decided to end the chapter of her life with Donald. "I can't tell you how glad I am this façade of a marriage is over," she said.

But what was she to do? Neither she nor anyone else knew what had happened to Donald or where he was. Melinda probably suspected, as so many other people did, that Donald was somewhere behind the Iron Curtain—what else could one think?—but there was no proof at all. As a start Melinda decided she would take steps to regain her American passport, which she had given up when she married an Englishman. She planned then to return to the States, at least

for a time, where she felt it would be easier to obtain a divorce. She had consulted her solicitors and had found that it might be possible to divorce Donald for desertion: there seemed no other possible grounds in the circumstances. In England this procedure would have involved waiting until her husband had been gone for three years; in America the necessary period was only two years.

But for the moment all this was merely theoretical. Melinda was in no shape, physical or mental, to make any decisive move in any direction. Life at Beaconsshaw without Donald was grim and difficult—for it was definitely a house that needed a man—and she became more depressed, more unhappy, more worried, as the days passed. She was like a patient after a long and wasting illness who simply cannot gather strength again. Her mother tried to persuade her to go to Paris for a holiday, leaving the children with her at Tatsfield, but Melinda would not go. Her baby daughter Melinda, likened by little Fergus to a pink rose and henceforth called Pinkers, was growing into a beautiful child, and, with Fergus and Donald, was her pride and joy, helping her to retain her sanity and a precarious grip on life. But the weeks passed and still she was unable to emerge from the bottomless pit of depression into which she had sunk.

She went back to her doctor, and this time, she reported, he told her she had to go away. "You are living in the past," he said, "and it's terribly bad for you. You are just wearing yourself out with anxiety and worry. What you need more

than anything is a rest, a change, and some sunshine. Go abroad."

Melinda agreed. She knew that this was what she longed for. But she still could not make up her mind to do anything about it. On the one hand she desperately wanted to get away from Beaconsshaw and its memories, to go away and hide herself somewhere where she would be anonymous and no longer a figure of public interest, fair game for the more sensational press, somewhere where she would no longer have to worry and could just relax and try to forget. But on the other hand, she had not the energy, the will, to do anything positive about her situation. And in a way I suppose she felt that she should remain in England so that she could be on hand if there were any developments, if M.I. 5 obtained any news of Donald.

May came round again, with the first anniversary of Donald's disappearance, and interest in the affair revived brutally. Melinda wrote to Harriet:

We are badgered again by the Press, this being the anniversary, and they took photographs of the boys coming out of school, which infuriated me. . . . I don't know whether to be sad or glad: people are asking me out and strangely enough I am in such a state of hyper-sensitivity that almost all social contacts exhaust me to a frightful degree. I really feel nearer to going off my rocker than I ever have. I don't think the bloody Press are ever going to let this story die, do you?

Then Mrs. Dunbar took charge. She reminded Melinda that something would soon have to be done about the children. Fergus would be eight years old in September and after that could no longer go to the primary school in Woldingham that he and five-year-old Donald had been attending. Further, it was imperative to take the boys out of reach of the reporters and photographers, who were not only pestering them on their way to and from school but were endeavouring to go into the school to question them.

The effect upon the two sensitive little boys of the noisy descent of a pack of reporters upon their home had been catastrophic right from the start. They were at first frightened that the reporters were going to take their home from them. A few days after Donald's disappearance Mrs. Dunbar saw seven-year-old Fergie crawling into the bushes flanking the wide garden. She asked him what he was doing and he replied, "I'm going to shoot the reporters who are making Mummy unhappy."

The commotion made by the press naturally communicated itself to the village, and although the grown-ups behaved splendidly to Melinda, the children were extremely cruel to the boys. They followed them from school chanting, "Your father's in prison," and led by the girls, who were by far the worse, they stoned Fergus and Donald. For years the children had nightmares and woke up screaming.

When Mrs. Dunbar tried to comfort Fergie one night, he said to her, "Oh! You just don't know what it is like to be a child."

And another day in Geneva over two years later, Melinda's mother found Fergie sitting deep in thought. He said, using a pet name he had invented for her, "Oh, Weezol, I'm still thinking—why? why? why?" Each time interest in the Maclean story revived and reporters appeared again on the scene, the children's fears also returned.

Impressed by her mother's arguments, Melinda agreed to go abroad, but only for a holiday: she wanted to return to Tatsfield. During the previous months her furniture and belongings had arrived from Washington and Cairo; and, despite the undeniable difficulties of life, she had become attached to Beaconshaw. It was her home, the first real home of her own she had had since her childhood in America, for in all other posts she and Donald had occupied furnished apartments or furnished houses. It had been an ill-omened house right from the start—the whole Maclean family had been constantly ill there, and it was from Beaconshaw that Donald had disappeared. Nevertheless, with one of those strange inconsistencies of feeling that were an integral part of her character, Melinda loved and was thrilled by this house in which she had known such great sorrow—and also a short period of happiness and precarious security.

But Mrs. Dunbar urged her daughter to take a broader view of their situation. Life for all of them would be far easier abroad, and whatever Melinda herself desired it would obviously be better for the children. Mrs. Dunbar herself would really have preferred to return to her own country, but Melinda would not hear of that—the United States was

far too far away. Paris was the next suggestion. Both Melinda and her mother would have liked to live in Paris, but it was expensive and neither of them quite liked the idea of a French school for the boys. Finally, on Mrs. Dunbar's proposal, it was decided that after a holiday in France they would go to Geneva to live and the boys would attend the excellent international school there. It was a school that Mrs. Dunbar knew well, for in the hey-day of the League of Nations, when the school had been founded for the benefit of the children of the delegates from all over the world who lived in and around Geneva, she had been one of the original subscribers. But the boys would not go to school before September, and it was necessary to leave England as soon as possible: in Melinda's condition there was no time to be lost. So Jay Sheers found them a farmhouse in Normandy where the whole family could spend the summer.

Preparations for their departure continued; and then two or three days before they were due to go Melinda, with unhappy memories of their experiences at Beauvallon the previous year, realized something should be done about the press. She consulted the Foreign Office, which drew up a statement that was circulated to the press through the Press Association. It said:

Mrs. Maclean intends soon to take her three children to France for a holiday of several weeks. She intends to go to live in France or Switzerland later for the sake of greater privacy for the children.

This was published without comment or embellishment by almost all the newspapers. The only outstanding exception was the *Daily Express*, whose handling of Mrs. Maclean's statement produced a spate of letters in *The Times* and a long leader-page rebuke in *The Observer*.

A few days before Melinda and her family were due to leave for France, a senior M.I. 5 investigator telephoned to Mrs. Dunbar at Beaconsshaw and said he would like to talk to her. She replied that she would be going up to Victoria to buy their tickets, and it was arranged that when she got there she would ring M.I. 5. This she did, and the M.I. 5 officer met her in the B.E.A. offices and took her to a nearby café. She had imagined he would have something to tell her, but his information was all negative. She then asked him if Melinda and the children would be under police surveillance in Normandy as they had been at Beauvallon. He said they would not; they would be "entirely on their own."

Mrs. Dunbar then put a direct question to him. She asked, "Can you swear to me that you know nothing about Donald Maclean's whereabouts, that you have no idea where he is?"

The investigator replied, "We know absolutely nothing. We have investigated every indication, every rumour—even the most impossible and unlikely—and we know nothing."

Mrs. Dunbar asked for assurances that if anything was learned, any discovery made, she and Melinda would be immediately informed.

He said, "I will get in touch with the Maclean family."

This by no means satisfied Mrs. Dunbar. She pointed out that as Donald's wife Melinda had the right to be informed as soon as there were any developments. "You must certainly communicate with her first," she insisted. And although she received no definite commitment on this point, Mrs. Dunbar went off to join Melinda and the children with a slight feeling of reassurance. Neither Melinda nor M.I. 5 had heard anything more from or about Donald, and although Mrs. Dunbar presumed a search of some kind was still continuing, the authorities no longer seemed to be particularly interested. It should then have been possible to induce Melinda herself to forget all about it and to try seriously to remake her life.

But later, after Melinda had disappeared, Mrs. Dunbar reproached herself and the security authorities for this lack of foresight. "I was Melinda's best protection," she said to me. "I was almost always with her and would never have left her at all had I thought there was any danger that Donald would try to contact her. But why didn't M.I. 5 tell me there was even an outside chance of her being contacted? When the contacts did get at her they must eventually have been doing so right in front of me, but I didn't notice, for I wasn't expecting anything, wasn't on the lookout. I must have appeared blind! But you don't see things that are happening so close to you unless you are on the lookout for them. Surely M.I. 5 must have realized that it was just possible that someone would try to get into touch with Melinda. If they had warned me I would have done anything to stop

her from going, from taking a step that can mean only unhappiness for her and for my grandchildren.”

Melinda and her family spent a few days with Harriet and her husband in Paris before driving down to Normandy in a new car Mrs. Dunbar had bought her unhappy daughter. The house they had rented at Glanville bore the grand name of *Le Manoir de Madame des Vaux* and was in delightful countryside a few miles inland from Deauville. It could have been a glorious vacation, but everything went wrong, starting with that all-important asset to a seaside holiday, the weather. As so often happens on the Normandy coast, it rained nearly every day. The house was miles from anywhere, including the nearest shop, and as, in common with practically all other French houses, it had no place to store food, Melinda seemed to spend most of her time as a chauffeur.

Except for a few days at the beginning of the month she spent at Glanville, she had neither the sunshine nor the rest her doctor had prescribed. Clare and I drove down to spend the week-end, and although we had a lot of fun in and around Deauville, including a visit to a small local casino in a little seaside town nearby, it was difficult to revive any of Melinda's real gaiety. Soon after that, with the weather growing steadily worse, she and her mother decided to cut short the holiday, and they returned to Paris. There again we saw a good deal of Melinda, and there for the first time she said she was sure Donald was behind the Iron Curtain. She still had nothing to go on, nobody had told her anything, least

of all the Foreign Office. But somehow, she said, she just knew. So she had really decided to remake her life. She was going to take her mother and the children to Geneva, then go over to England to try to get rid of Beaconsshaw, sell Donald's car, talk to solicitors seriously about a divorce, and take steps to get back her American passport. And she had to find a job!

Romanticizing herself somewhat, as I later discovered, she drew a graphic picture of the terrible plight she would be in should her mother die. If this happened, she and the children, who were entirely dependent upon Mrs. Dunbar, would very likely starve, she said, because her mother's money "died" with her, so to speak.

This was of course all nonsense. It was true that she and the children were living on Mrs. Dunbar's money, for Donald had left her nothing but debts and she had received not a penny from the Foreign Office since Donald was "suspended" on June 1, 1951. But she had a small income of her own, she would at some time or other come into more money from a trust fund established by her grandfather, and even when her mother died she would be reasonably comfortably off. The fact remains that, most fortunately for her and her children, financial worries at least were spared her.

Other worries persisted, and were indeed more real to her: she felt the children needed a father, that it would be bad for them continually to be brought up in a manless home. I suggested that after she had divorced Donald she could easily

remarry. "Who would marry a notorious woman like me, with three small children?" she asked.

The answer was obvious—lots of men would be only too delighted to marry her. For Melinda, although she seemed to have aged some ten years in the months since Donald went off into the unknown, was still an exceedingly attractive girl, who, if she could only emerge from the black depression that gripped her so relentlessly, would look far younger than her thirty-six years of age. She had many most admirable qualities, and her natural gaiety and spontaneity would soon return. But no. She was convinced at the moment that her marital life was definitely over, never to be recommenced. The only future for her lay in finding a job—but what could she do? This was a problem, for she had no training, and except for two short spells as an assistant in large bookshops she had never done any work of any kind. My wife and I promised to think about this problem.

On September 3 Melinda left Paris for Geneva, driving with her mother, the three children, and their devoted English nurse. It is another example of the contradictory traits in Melinda that this apparently frail, sick girl could quite easily drive the long and sometimes arduous journey from Paris to Geneva, mainly in pouring rain, in one lap—they left Paris around nine-thirty in the morning and reached Geneva twelve hours later.

At first Melinda liked Geneva; she found it "clean, bright, and solid," and it was a pleasure and a relief to sink back into the comfortable beds and chairs of a good hotel and

be waited upon by cheerful, efficient Swiss servants. After a few days she went with considerable trepidation to see the headmaster of the International School to arrange about sending the boys there—and to tell him who they were.

Afterwards she wrote to her sister: "It was absolute agony telling him about Donald, but I felt of course I had to do it."

At the same time she had the difficult, delicate task of explaining to Fergus and Donald what had happened to their father. She wrote to Harriet:

The boys now know all about it, and at the moment their worst fear seems to be that I might vanish too. It all came out quite naturally while they were talking to Mother. Fergie is horrified he [Donald] might have done something wrong at the Office and the F.O. will be very angry when he returns. Little Donald said perhaps he had gone to India with the Shakee [?]-that would be a good place to hide. They said, "Will *we* marry again?"! I can't repeat it all but it is amazing how understanding and completely generous in mind children are.

The boys started school, which they liked very much, and Melinda looked round for a flat. She was also looking vaguely and without much sense of direction for the famous job. But although physically she picked up a little, spiritually she was still very low.

She wrote to me in the middle of September: "I feel so completely depressed since arriving here and can't see how I can summon up whatever it takes to start a new life."

At the beginning of October, Melinda and her family

moved into a little apartment they had found in the rue des Alpes in a most pleasant part of Geneva, within sight of the lovely lake and with a little park nearby in which the children could play. I was in Geneva at the time, attending one of the innumerable international conferences which with banking and watchmaking appear to be the main occupations of that curious city, and I went to see her in her new setting.

Melinda was a little excited, a little elated about the flat. She felt it would make a great difference to their lives and regarded the move as a sort of symbolic "settling down" in Geneva. When she came in, pale cheeks a little flushed, arms full of flowers, vegetables, and fruit from the market, I thought she looked much better than she had for many months. One of her most endearing qualities was an enthusiasm for life that the savage blows fate dealt her never entirely destroyed. She was always prepared to make the best of circumstances and to regard each new page in her life as the opening of a better and brighter chapter. The new flat, which was somewhat small, a little dark, and filled with typical furnished-apartment furniture and fittings, could have been intensely depressing. Melinda refused to let it add to her depression, and indeed seemed to regard it as a sort of challenge. She was determined to find something good about it, and wrote to her sister, who had a most delightful flat in Paris:

We simply adore our apartment. This is the first time I have lived in the middle of a city for years and I simply

love it. Never mention the country to me again except for week-ends and holidays.

At the time she had moved into Beaconsshaw, that large, unmanageable house in the heart of the country, she had said defiantly how glad she was to be finished with cities, how she adored the country. Poor Melinda! With that spirit she really did deserve something better from life.

Clare and I said good-bye to her in Geneva and arranged that she should come to stay with us in Paris. And although we wrote to each other a few times, that was the last time I saw her, for the next time I went to Geneva it was to report her disappearance.

After she had fully settled down in Geneva, her mother persuaded her to take a long rest, and except for a few days in Paris with Harriet, who said she had never seen Melinda so low in spirits, she spent most of November and December in England, having left the children with her mother in Geneva. In England she stayed with friends and went to London to see her doctor, her solicitors, and her bankers. She started all the things she had intended to do but made no great progress with any of them. But she enjoyed herself, and, as she wrote, "saw almost everybody I ever knew and had quite a whirl."

She returned to Geneva two days before Christmas; and then on January 1 wrote to Harriet:

Thank God for a new year. I couldn't have been happier to see 1952 go. Mother and I celebrated quietly with a bottle

of champagne and a miniature log fire and in our strange optimistic way felt that perhaps 1953 might be better for us all. We survived Xmas once more. I am really getting to dread it and Mother and I could hardly wait to throw away all Xmas decorations; only the Xmas tree remains. Next year I am going to send the boys away with their school friends on a skiing trip.

The next few months passed quietly and, so far as one knew at the time, uneventfully. Mrs. Dunbar left Geneva on January 20, and after spending ten days with Harriet in Paris, sailed for the United States on February 2. She did not return to Switzerland until four months later. In the fuller knowledge that we now have of Melinda's disappearance, this period assumes an importance that it did not appear to hold at the time. In late February or early March, Melinda took the children to Saanenmöser, a mountain resort close to Gstaad, where she joined an English friend and her two little girls for a fortnight's skiing.

Soon after she got back to Geneva she wrote to Harriet: "I am in a dismally unstable state and have the horrid feeling almost anything might push me over the precipice. If I can only hang on for another year."

There was no explanation of this cryptic and, one now feels, pregnant little passage, sandwiched with no further comment between inquiries after Harriet's new baby and information about Melinda's youngest child. In the middle of May Mrs. Dunbar arrived in Paris on her way back from New York and telephoned to Melinda, who was overjoyed

at her return. During their conversation Melinda said she would like to accept an offer an American friend had made to take them all in as paying guests in his house on Majorca for the summer. On June 10 the tickets for Majorca were bought, and they were due to leave on June 30, the day after the boys' school term ended.

On June 10, also, Melinda wrote to Harriet:

Sorry for the long silence but am in fact in a fever of preparation for going away, putting winter clothes away, business affairs, and trying to repair some of the damage to this "bijou residence" so I can rent it while away.

But on June 30 Melinda changed her mind; she said she felt she must have mountain air rather than sea air; and she took the children again to Saanenmöser, intending to stay there a fortnight. She returned to Geneva five days later and said Saanenmöser had been disappointing, the weather had been bad, and she had decided Majorca would be better. They had some trouble in rebooking the rather complicated tickets for the journey from Switzerland to Majorca, and they did not leave until July 23.

After six weeks in Majorca they arrived back at the flat in the rue des Alpes on Monday, September 7. The boys were expecting to return to school on Tuesday, but the opening was postponed for a week, and on the following Friday, September 11, Melinda told her mother that she was taking them to stay with an old friend of Cairo days who, she said, had a house at Territet. After a considerable last-minute

rush, they were ready to leave by early afternoon, and Mrs. Dunbar waved good-bye to them as they drove off in Melinda's car at three-thirty P.M., saying they would be back on Sunday evening. That was the last time she saw them.

When they had not returned by Monday morning, Mrs. Dunbar telephoned to M.I. 5 in London. A great search began, and two senior security officers flew out from London and reached Geneva in the early hours on Tuesday. On Wednesday a telegram purporting to have come from Melinda was delivered to Mrs. Dunbar. Written in a foreign handwriting, containing several blatant errors, and posted in Territet, it said:

TERRIBLY SORRY DELAY IN CONTACTING YOU. UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE ARISEN. AM STAYING HERE LONGER. PLEASE ADVISE SCHOOLBOYS RETURNING ABOUT A WEEKS TIME. ALL EXTREMELY WELL. PINK ROSE IN MARVELLOUS FORM. LOVE FROM ALL MELINDA

The next morning Melinda's car was found in a garage at Lausanne, and by the following day inquiries had established beyond doubt that she and the children had gone by train from Lausanne to Zurich, had there caught the Arlberg express, and had got off at the frontier town of Schwarzach Saint-Veit. There they had been met by a man in a large American car and had been driven into the Russian zone of Austria. Melinda was on her way to join Donald somewhere behind the Iron Curtain.

On Wednesday night I arrived in Geneva from Paris. I saw Mrs. Dunbar the following day, when she told me the story *as it then appeared to her*. Her conclusions, and mine too, were that Melinda had been lured away. We did not think she had actually been kidnapped, but we were certain that she had not gone of her own free will.

Of the complete honesty of Mrs. Dunbar's original story, which was also the one she had told M.I. 5 and the Swiss police, I have not and had not at the time the slightest doubt. It contained the facts *as she then saw them*. It was only a little later, when she had begun to recover from the quite shattering shock and sorrow of her daughter's disappearance with the children she adored, that she began to see things in a different light. Then she began to remember incidents, conversations, moods even, that placed this tragic flight in an entirely different perspective; she began to examine the material evidence left behind with new eyes. With this knowledge, Mrs. Dunbar was able to realize that Melinda had not gone unknowingly into exile.

I will reproduce the account Mrs. Dunbar gave me on Thursday, September 17, as it was published in the *News Chronicle* the next day; and then I will go back, as I have done with her so many times since, and examine all the events leading up to the disappearance, which it is now clear to me must have had its inception sometime during the four months Mrs. Dunbar spent in America at the beginning of that year. Then I will follow in detail Melinda's pathetic trail from

Geneva to the last place she was reliably reported seen this side of the Iron Curtain.

This was Mrs. Dunbar's story:

We had all returned on Friday week from Majorca, where Melinda spent the best holiday she has had since Donald disappeared. The boys, nine-year-old Fergus and seven-year-old Donald, were to have gone back to the International School here on the Tuesday, but the reopening was postponed.

On Friday Melinda went off to the weekly market and returned around 11 A.M., loaded down with vegetables and fruit, very elated. She told me, "Two of the loveliest things have happened."

What the second was I cannot remember—she may not even have told me—but the first was that a friend of Cairo days, whom she said was named Robin Muir, had met her accidentally in the market and invited her and the children to spend a week-end with him and his wife in their villa at Territet, where, he told her, they had an English governess.

As she might have difficulty in finding the villa, he had said he would meet her in the lobby of a Montreux hotel—I cannot remember whether she told me which one—at 4:30 that afternoon.

With one thing and another, she was late in setting off, but drove away around 3:30.

When she went to market, I had asked her to cash a cheque on my account, for which she has a joint signature. I learned later she had drawn 700 Swiss francs (around £60).

She bought baby Melinda a little woollen jacket and some shoes, paid a garage bill of 50 francs, and gave me 200, so she did not start off with a great deal of money—certainly not more than 400 francs, or about £33.

The boys were in grey flannel suits, shorts, and blue sports shirts. Donald insisted on taking a pair of blue jeans I had bought him in New York.

They had no other clothes, and Melinda took only one small suitcase with night clothes for the children and one for herself. In that, I believe, she had mainly summer things.

As the boys were due back at school at 8:15 on Monday* morning, I expected them to return home around 6 P.M. on Sunday, and from then on sat at the window overlooking the quay and waited for them.

Since Donald's disappearance, we have all lived in a state of great anxiety, and if ever Melinda was going to be later than she expected she would invariably telephone me. In fact we all telephone each other madly whenever apart.

When she neither returned nor telephoned on Sunday evening, I was frantic but thought perhaps there was too much traffic on the roads and she had decided to postpone her return until Monday morning.

On Monday I went to the British Consulate. They told me my report of her absence would go through ordinary channels. But as I knew this was an urgent matter I telephoned straight to the Foreign Office in London to the Chief Security Officer—and got immediate action.

Why had I not told the Swiss police up to then? Well, I didn't know any of the top men and thought it would be

* This was an error, since the school did not open until Tuesday.

useless to try to explain to a subordinate who might never have heard of the Maclean story. But they have been wonderful and handled the whole affair with the greatest tact and sympathy.

The next tangible thing was a telegram I received yesterday. This was so false, so utterly unlike Melinda, that all it did was to increase our anxiety.

And that is really all. I do not know what has happened to Melinda and have no theories, except I am sure she has not gone off on her own accord.

In recent months she has been happy, leading a normal life again, going to cocktail parties and dinners, making friends. She was planning to seek a divorce from Donald for desertion next year, when she would not have seen or heard of him for three years.

Stories that she received a mysterious visitor with news of him or that she had had letters or other news from him are quite untrue. We were so close to each other I knew everything—and no one came to the apartment without my knowing.

What has struck us—myself, Melinda's sister Harriet, and her husband Jay—is the extraordinary similarity between the two disappearances, Donald's and hers.

Both took place on a Friday at the beginning of a weekend, during which suspicion would not ordinarily have been aroused. Both went away with a previously unknown friend—we had never heard of Guy Burgess or Robin Muir. Both took only enough clothes for a day or so. Both disappearances were notified to the Foreign Office on a Monday and became public with a great newspaper outcry on a Tuesday.

The Missing Macleans

Apart from the fact that the telegram I had seemed almost designed to awaken suspicion—it was so false and unlike Melinda—there is a remarkable similarity between the telegrams. Both have obvious faults in English and must have been written by a foreigner. And both in the case of the telegram received by Lady Maclean, Donald's mother, and mine, a pet family name has been used to give an air of authenticity.

The pretended telegram from Melinda says: "Pink Rose in marvellous form." Well, we did call the baby Pink Rose. It seemed an amusing name—and after all as I, my daughter, and my granddaughter are all called Melinda, there are too many Melindas in the family.

But Melinda Maclean would never have put that phrase in a telegram to me.

No, Melinda was absolutely normal in her manner on Friday morning, and it seems clear that the pretended friend in Cairo—Mr. Robin Muir—of whom no trace can be found, was someone who deliberately lured her into a trap of some kind.

The day after this story appeared, Mrs. Dunbar, heart-broken and exhausted—she had not slept for four days—flew to Paris with her son-in-law Jay Sheers. The Swiss police had booked their air tickets under assumed names but had informed the French police of their arrival time. The Paris Sûreté sent two inspectors to meet the plane at Le Bourget, but their car was involved in an accident en route. It arrived after a friend of the Sheers had driven Mrs. Dunbar away to a quiet house in the country; the police did not find

her until she returned to the Sheers' flat in Paris ten days later. They were furious about this, and took the attitude that Mrs. Dunbar had deliberately given them the slip. Jay suggested they had only to get into touch with the Geneva police, to whom he had given the address before leaving. But apparently this would have meant a loss of face in the admission that their men had missed Mrs. Dunbar at the airport!

Five weeks after she had left Geneva Mrs. Dunbar returned there with her daughter Harriet and also Catherine—who once again had flown over from America to be by her mother's side—to close up the flat in the rue des Alpes. Almost immediately she made two startling discoveries that told her without possibility of doubt that, contrary to her earlier impression, Melinda had planned her flight in advance, had known when she drove off with the children that she might well never return.

The flat was as Melinda's mother had left it, with clothes and other personal belongings lying around among the impersonal furnishings of a rented apartment. But it required only a short examination for Mrs. Dunbar to discover that Melinda had taken all her clothes with her, everything from suits and dresses down to the new underclothes Mrs. Dunbar had bought for her in New York a few months before—everything except her mink coat and an expensive new evening dress.

The second discovery was that of a large sheet of proofs of twenty-four photos of the three children, with a little envelope with photographer's directions clipped to it. Ex-

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THE GENEVA PHOTOGRAPHER'S ORDER FOR ENLARGEMENTS OF
THE CHILDREN'S PICTURE FOR "MRS. SMITH"

tremely surprised that she knew nothing about these photos and had never seen them before—for not only would Melinda have told her if she was thinking of having a photograph taken of the children, but together they would eagerly have examined the proofs—Mrs. Dunbar inspected it carefully. From the little envelope she saw that Melinda, in the name of Mrs. Smith, had ordered three enlargements of photograph Number twenty-three and had called for them on May 21, two days after she, Mrs. Dunbar, had arrived back

from America. Mrs. Dunbar also found that the photograph was to have been enlarged to the size required for American passports and for those of some of the Iron Curtain countries. Melinda and the children usually travelled on Melinda's British passport, which requires a smaller photograph. Both the passport and the enlargements were missing, and presumably Melinda had taken them with her.

These two pieces of evidence were entirely conclusive in our opinion. Melinda's disappearance had been planned at least four months before it took place.

Looking back, Mrs. Dunbar told me how reluctant she had been to leave Melinda to go to the United States. Despite her own two-months' holiday in England, Melinda had been terribly depressed when she returned to Geneva just before Christmas, and although she was beginning to make friends there, Mrs. Dunbar had been uneasy at leaving her on her own. But she felt she had to go, and Melinda persuaded her to do so. Geneva was all right for a time, but it was necessary to look into the future, and Mrs. Dunbar was urging Melinda to consider taking the children back to America after they had spent enough time in Switzerland to give them a good grounding in French. Melinda had not completely agreed, but she too thought it would be a good plan if Mrs. Dunbar made various inquiries in America.

So apart from business of her own, Mrs. Dunbar had gone to New York basically to see what could be done about getting back Melinda's American passport, and also finding them some place suitable to live.

She told me, "I felt the children must have roots somewhere, and there could be no better place for them than the United States. I looked for an apartment somewhere between Sixtieth and Ninetieth Streets so that the children could play in Central Park. I could find nothing suitable, and so decided we would all live in a small town within easy reach of New York, with a life of its own, and I would later look for a small apartment for myself in New York. I felt we would all be secure in the States; and further, Melinda could then obtain a divorce from Donald with only two years' waiting. Another reason was that my money comes from America, and back home we would no longer have difficulties about the sterling area and other currency regulations."

While she was in America Mrs. Dunbar heard "fairly regularly" from Melinda, who was, however, an erratic correspondent. On at least two occasions Mrs. Dunbar had to send telegrams to discover whether a worrying silence meant only that Melinda had been too preoccupied to write or whether there was really something wrong. Before leaving Geneva Mrs. Dunbar had paid into her Geneva bank sufficient money to last Melinda and the children until she returned. At the beginning of February Melinda wrote to tell her mother that she proposed taking the children on a skiing holiday in March; so Mrs. Dunbar, knowing how casual Melinda was about money, sent her a cheque for seven hundred dollars. Later, when she was back in Geneva, Mrs. Dunbar found Melinda "in a bit of a state about money," saying she couldn't afford this or that. Mrs. Dunbar asked her what had

happened to the seven hundred dollars, and found that Melinda had never even cashed the cheque, which was still in her handbag. There is no real significance in this incident: it is just another sidelight on Melinda's odd character.

But the visit to Saanenmöser, to which she returned so mysteriously four months later, may have been extremely important: it is possible that the first tentative approach to Melinda may have been made there. Saanenmöser is a tiny village, with three or four hotels and half a dozen villas, located in a long, smooth valley where there is excellent skiing. It is not widely known; it is quiet, discreet, and easily accessible to Geneva, Montreux, and other cities.

Soon after Mrs. Dunbar and Melinda had moved to Geneva they received a letter from an American named Douglas MacKillop, whose wife, who had died some time previously, had been a friend of Melinda's sister. MacKillop, who had been a security officer at the American Embassy in Paris, told them that he had given up his job and had settled in Majorca, where he had a large house at a place called Cala Ratjada. He said if they would like an excellent seaside holiday he would be delighted to take them all as paying guests during the summer.

Before Mrs. Dunbar left for America she and Melinda had discussed whether to accept this offer or not but had reached no decision. It was this offer that Melinda referred to, in their telephone conversation on Mrs. Dunbar's return to Paris in May; she said she thought it would be an excellent idea if they accepted MacKillop's invitation. This,

coming out of the blue, somewhat surprised Mrs. Dunbar, but its only significance lay in the fact that it showed that Melinda had decided, nearly two months in advance, that she wanted to go to Majorca for the summer.

Back again in Geneva, Mrs. Dunbar was shocked at her daughter's appearance. Melinda was whiter than ever, drawn and strained and utterly apathetic. She looked so ill and wretched that Mrs. Dunbar asked anxiously if there was anything the matter, whether she was ill or upset. Melinda replied vaguely that there was nothing particularly wrong. She implied that she had been lonely and worried about money—which may have been true but was certainly quite unnecessary—and about the servants. That was more to the point, for Melinda was notoriously weak with servants. Mrs. Dunbar took things in hand.

Melinda's strange apathy went very deep. Earlier she had been full of interest and excitement about the plans she and her mother had been making and particularly about the steps Mrs. Dunbar was to take about getting back Melinda's American passport and obtaining American nationality for the children. But now Melinda showed no interest in all that Mrs. Dunbar had done. She did not even trouble to read any of the voluminous correspondence Mrs. Dunbar had with lawyers and the State Department. Similarly, although expressing great gratitude, she made only a perfunctory inspection of the delightful clothes that Mrs. Dunbar had brought back for her. Most of them remained in their original pack-

ages, in which, it is presumed, Melinda took them away with her.

Mrs. Dunbar, too, had been involved in much discussion about Melinda's possible job. She had no idea what she wanted to or could do, but she was insistent that she should do something. At one time she had been interested in photography, and Mrs. Dunbar thought she might try to become a specialist in photography of children.

"After all," she said, "you have three delightful models on the premises."

So Mrs. Dunbar bought Melinda a Rolleiflex camera. This too remained untouched.

Life went on, however. Melinda had made new friends during Mrs. Dunbar's absence and went out to cocktail parties and dinners more frequently than she had since her Cairo days. But she in no way regained her spirits.

Another incident, strangely reminiscent of a similar happening in Washington, occurred soon after Mrs. Dunbar's return. Geneva is by no means a dressy place, and at most of the dinner parties Melinda attended the men wore regular suits, or at the most dinner jackets and black ties, and the women simple evening frocks. But for one party to which she was invited Melinda was asked to wear full evening dress, as some of the other women had new ball dresses that they wished to show off. Melinda mentioned this to Mrs. Dunbar, who with her usual generosity insisted that Melinda should immediately have a suitable dress sent from Paris. Together

they telephoned to their Paris dressmaker, and in a few days the dress arrived. Melinda tried it on; it was lovely; she "adored it." It was hung in a wardrobe, and Melinda went to the party in a simple black frock. The new dress, still unworn, was the one Mrs. Dunbar found in the apartment when she went back, a month after Melinda had disappeared, to close up the apartment.

All this time nothing happened that, even in the light of all she then knew, Mrs. Dunbar could afterwards remember as having any significance. The hot weather came, and on June 10 Melinda bought the tickets for Majorca. The school term ended on June 30, and they were all due to leave the following day. A letter was written to MacKillop, telling him they would be arriving at Cala Ratjada on July 2. As the time drew near, the boys' excitement rose high; they loved the seaside and for weeks talked of little else. Melinda appeared preoccupied and quiet but also seemed to be looking forward to the change. Then, two or three days before the end of the month, something happened—what it was we do not know. But one night Mrs. Dunbar, who is an extremely bad sleeper, was reading in her bed long after midnight when she heard Melinda walking restlessly about in the next room.

She got up and went in to see her. "What's the matter, Melinda?" she asked. "Can't you sleep? Have you something on your mind?"

Melinda looked at her mother in silence for a few moments. Then she said, "Oh, Mummy, I don't know quite how

to tell you, but I've changed my mind. I feel I need some mountain air, and I want to take the children up to Saanenmöser for two weeks before we go to Majorca."

Mrs. Dunbar was astounded. She and Melinda knew only too well how excitedly the boys had been looking forward to Majorca, and, although they had enjoyed skiing, this was high summer, there was no snow, and there would be practically nothing for them to do at Saanenmöser. Further, Melinda knew only too well that Mrs. Dunbar herself loathed the mountains.

So Mrs. Dunbar said, "There's no need for you to go to Majorca if you don't want to. But Fergus and Donald will be brokenhearted if they don't go. You go on up to the mountains and I'll take the children to Majorca."

But Melinda refused this compromise: she wanted the children with her, she said. Mother and daughter talked until early morning, but Melinda, although apologetic and distressed, was determined, and as happened so often she got her own way. The children's disappointment when they were told of the change of plans was pathetic, but even this did not influence Melinda. That morning she went to the travel agency, cancelled their bookings, and wired to MacKillop in Majorca to tell him they would not be coming until much later. Then on the morning of July 3 Melinda bundled the children into her car and drove off for the hills.

The change in Melinda's plans had obviously been very sudden. She had written to Harriet on June 24—the last letter Harriet received from her—and had not mentioned the

holidays, speaking neither of preparations for going to Majorca nor of any intention she had of not going. It was a hurried, gossipy letter, concerned mainly with Harriet and her second child, which had been born a few weeks earlier. There was only one thing of significance in the letter. Melinda wrote, "Be prepared for a long visit from me next fall," which would seem to indicate that she had at that moment no thought that by "next fall" she would be in a place from which visits to Paris were impossible.

On July 3, soon after Melinda had left with the children for Saanenmöser, Harriet telephoned from Paris, wanting to know what had happened. When she heard that Melinda had changed her mind and had gone to the mountains she was definitely alarmed. She had a premonition that something was wrong, and she telephoned Melinda at Saanenmöser. Their conversation was unsatisfactory and inconclusive, and it served only to heighten Harriet's uneasiness. She contemplated flying to Switzerland, but as her baby was only a few weeks old and the nurse had just left, it was nearly impossible for her to leave Paris.

It was a great pity. The chances that Melinda would have told Harriet anything are remote—she had obviously been instructed by the intermediaries who had approached her that she must in no circumstances say anything to anybody about her plans. But the fact that her behaviour was sufficiently strange to alarm her sister might have influenced the frightful decision Melinda would soon be called upon to make. It is curious that despite the extraordinarily

close bonds of affection that bound these four sensitive women, mother and three daughters, this seems to be the only occasion on which any of them appears to have had a premonition of an unknown, unseen danger that was threatening one of the others, the only premonition of the tragedy so soon to strike.

When Melinda returned to Geneva, only five days after leaving for a fortnight, she told her mother that the weather in the mountains had been bad: there had been no sun, the atmosphere was heavy, and altogether Saanenmöser had been "dull and boring." So she had brought the children back, and now suggested that they all go off to Majorca. Melinda's explanation for this change of plans was reasonable. Swiss skiing resorts serve essentially the winter tourist, and although the statement that there had been no sun might not have stood up to examination, it is likely that without its influx of winter visitors Saanenmöser had not been very exciting. Of course, all these things Melinda could well have known, or at least guessed, beforehand. But Mrs. Dunbar, delighted to have her daughter and grandchildren back and pleased at the prospect of finally starting the seaside holiday, did not question her. She was by now accustomed to the changing moods of her unhappy daughter and was concerned only in seeing that everything possible was done to make her happy, help her to forget the terrible tragedy.

When Melinda then went to rebook the tickets for Majorca, it was the height of the holiday season and planes were already full. She could not obtain passages for the next

fortnight, and it was not until July 23 that they got off. They flew to Barcelona and then on to Majorca.

In some ways the five weeks in Majorca were the happiest Melinda had spent since Donald left. Cala Ratjada, where they stayed, is a little seaside village some sixty miles from the capital, Palma, which is the more usual resort for visitors. It is situated on the lovely rocky eastern coast of the island, on a bay; and in villas built on the cliff live a small colony of British and American families who have made this charming island their summer home. The weather was magnificent, and the children had a heavenly time on the beach and playing in the sea. Melinda appeared to be happy. Although she was nervous and worried at times, she seemed to have shaken off the depression that had obtained so firm a grip on her. She was a great success and as usual made many friends and admirers.

As Mrs. Dunbar watched Melinda thaw out in the Majorca sunshine and in the friendliness and admiration that surrounded her, her own anxiety, which had weighed so heavily upon her for the previous two years, also began to lift a little. At last, she told herself, Melinda was beginning to forget the tragedy that had come into her life, was beginning to forget that she was the wife of the Missing Diplomat, was even beginning to forget the diplomat himself.

But events were to prove Mrs. Dunbar wrong. Among the friends they made at Cala Ratjada was an Austrian-born artist, a tall, fair man of about fifty, who had become a nat-

uralized British citizen some time after he had fled Hitler, and had settled down in Majorca with his wife.

One day when they had been at Cala Ratjada a fortnight or so Melinda said quite suddenly, "How like Donald he is!"

There was indeed a strong resemblance, not only in looks but also in walk, gesture, and voice. Mrs. Dunbar had at once noticed it but had said nothing, hoping that Melinda would not see it, as it would merely recall the missing husband Mrs. Dunbar prayed she was slowly forgetting. There was of course no harm in a man's looking like Donald, no harm in Melinda's noticing it, but, as Mrs. Dunbar realized with a sinking heart, it meant only too clearly that Melinda had far from forgotten Donald. On the small Cala Ratjada beach, where it would have been difficult to avoid anyone even if one had wanted to, it meant seeing him every day.

One day soon after this, when Melinda had come back from the beach, she stood on the veranda of the house in which they were living, gazing out to sea, and said suddenly and with no connection to what she had previously been saying, "He doesn't believe in war either."

At the time Mrs. Dunbar, to whom the remark was apparently addressed, took little notice. She replied casually, her mind on other things, something like, "Well, lots of people don't believe in war," and gave the matter no further thought.

After Melinda had disappeared this chance remark assumed great significance. Melinda was one of the least politically

conscious of women, quite astonishingly so if it is remembered that she had been married for over ten years to a man whose profession had to do, if not actually with politics, at least with its very near second cousin, international affairs. She was rarely, if ever, heard to initiate a discussion on any of the great world problems of the day, and if they were brought up in her presence she would reply vaguely and without interest or knowledge. It is difficult, in view of the circumstances of her life and the fact that she had moved for so long in diplomatic circles, to believe that she was unaware of the problems that were agitating the minds of the people who surrounded her, but the currents of thought seemed to flow over her, leaving no mark; she had no active interest in them whatsoever. But if at the back of her mind she did store away a few vague, unformed views, they were the residue of views she had heard Donald advance—the few phrases or ideas that had stuck—for Donald did the family thinking. None of these political convictions, however, had gone very deep, for after Donald's disappearance it was rarely indeed that Melinda said anything that had any apparent connection with any views Donald was known to have held. Certainly I have been unable to find anyone who ever heard Melinda say anything deeper about communism than how inexpressibly dreary it all was!

This vital question of "not believing in war" was one of the rare exceptions. Melinda had mentioned the topic in quite different circumstances once before; and little Fergus, watching a school friend playing rapturously with toy tanks

and wooden soldiers, had once said rather proudly that *his* daddy was fighting for peace. Clearly this must have been the outstanding plank in whatever creed it was to which Donald subscribed that had impressed itself on Melinda and the eldest child. How important it was one cannot now know, for neither Melinda nor Fergus is available to tell us. But it could well be that those few innocent words hide the entire secret of the disappearance of these five human beings—two adults and three children. Was it by sheer coincidence that Melinda heard some echo of them on the golden sands of Majorca? Or had she already received messages telling her that wherever Donald was and whatever else he might be doing he was basically still, as he would say, fighting for peace?

There was only one other thing of any significance that happened during the Majorca holiday. One evening as they were getting ready to go out to dinner Mrs. Dunbar heard Melinda say—again, more to herself than to her mother—“Oh, what have I done with Donald’s letter?”

It is probable that she was referring to the letter she received in Tatsfield a few weeks after Donald disappeared and which she always carried with her. She probably transferred it from handbag to handbag, and, having put it in the bag that she took down to the beach, was just going out when she remembered she had not put it with the other things women carry about with them in evening bags.

There is a vague possibility that Melinda might have received another letter, which she kept secret. But the odds are against this. Although events were to prove that Melinda

did not tell her mother everything, she was not secretive with her, by and large, and would hardly have held this information back from her closest confidante. Furthermore, Mrs. Dunbar knew Donald's writing, and it would be extremely risky for him to write Melinda a letter that he did not want anyone else to see, for as often as not the concierge brought up the post and handed the letters to anyone who was about, Melinda or Mrs. Dunbar or even the children. Surely a letter in Donald's handwriting would have been such a shattering event that it could not be lightly passed off—Mrs. Dunbar would want to know, would expect to know, what he had to say, where he was; she would ask all the hundreds of excited questions a letter from him would naturally arouse.

The letter could, of course, have arrived when she was away—but how could Donald have been sure this would happen? It could also have come in someone else's handwriting, with a typewritten address—or in many other ways. But the probabilities are that the letter to which Melinda was referring was the original one she treasured and eventually took away with her. The people who were directing Donald's life, who arranged his flight and Melinda's after him, were far too clever to take any chances with a letter that had to go through the ordinary mails. Melinda was obviously contacted several times before the last meeting, which resulted in her flight, but it is unlikely that any of the meetings were arranged by a letter or that anything at any time was put in writing.

Soon after they had arrived in Majorca Mrs. Dunbar gave Melinda, as a combined birthday and Christmas present, a pair of gold clips and a gold pin, which are one of the specialties of the island, beautifully made by Majorcan goldsmiths. The clips were ready before the pin, and on the last day in Majorca, as they were driving to the harbour in Palma, Melinda rushed to the goldsmith's to pick up the pin. She was wearing these expensive gold ornaments when she disappeared only a few days later.

Shortly before they left Majorca Mrs. Dunbar suggested that Melinda write to the garage in Geneva where they had left the car to ask that it be taken to the airport to meet them when they landed. She also suggested that as they were due to arrive in the late afternoon it would be helpful if Melinda would also write to the concierge to ask her to buy milk, bread, butter, eggs, and the other groceries they would require that evening and the next morning. The day they were leaving, Mrs. Dunbar found that Melinda had not written and asked her to send telegrams.

They landed at Cointrin airport, some twenty minutes from Geneva, around four-thirty P.M. on Monday, September 7. There was no car to meet them. Mrs. Dunbar turned to Melinda. "Did you send the tele—"

Before she could finish her sentence a contrite Melinda broke in. "Oh, Mummy! I'm terribly sorry. In the rush to get away I forgot all about it."

For once the long-suffering Mrs. Dunbar was definitely angry. The children were tired and a little fretful after their

long journey; there were piles of luggage to handle, for in addition to the bags they took, there were the big native-made straw carry-alls they had bought, as well as all kinds of treasures the children had collected. "Well," she said, "you'd better go and phone quickly."

They sat around in the airport for half an hour before the car arrived; and when they reached the flat there was of course no milk, no bread, no butter—nothing for the children's supper. Still contrite, Melinda said she would go and buy the groceries. The children were still unloading the car and leaving bags and suitcases strewn about the living room. Melinda went off to the shops.

She could have bought everything they needed not only for that night but for the next week in about ten minutes, for the shops were just around the corner. But she was away fifty minutes. When she returned she had not only the packages of groceries but also a number of letters, which she must have collected from the letterbox in the hall. She dropped the groceries onto the table and all the letters but one on the desk. Then she stood there with the one remaining letter in her hand, staring at her mother with an extraordinary expression on her face. Astonishment, apprehension, fear, excitement seemed to follow one another so rapidly that they merged into what was almost a grimace.

"She looked quite awful," said Mrs. Dunbar. But, wise after the event, her mother now believes that the dominant expression was one of excitement. "Thinking over it, as I have done hundreds of times, I now feel that Melinda's whole

attitude at that moment expressed one thing: This is it—this is zero hour.”

Mrs. Dunbar immediately asked what the matter was. Had she received bad news?

“No,” said Melinda, pulling herself together. “It’s nothing. It’s only a letter from the school telling me that opening has been postponed a week, and the boys don’t have to return until a week from tomorrow.”

This certainly did not seem very tragic to Mrs. Dunbar, who remarked that it was rather good news—it would give them time to get the boys ready at leisure and to allow them to settle down a little after the excitement of their holiday. With the litter of unpacked bags all around them and the need to get the children their evening meal, the episode passed out of Mrs. Dunbar’s mind. She did not give it a second thought until several weeks later. But Melinda’s behaviour, viewed in retrospect, now became definitely curious.

What had happened? It is improbable in the extreme that the letter, a circular from the school announcing a delay in reopening, could have had any particular significance. Certainly if Melinda knew at that time that she would shortly be taking the children away, and wished to have as long a start as possible before their disappearance was noticed, the fact that Donald and Fergie would not absolutely have to be back at the flat until the following Monday evening would be a help.

But all this was something that could not have been foreseen. Neither Melinda nor, one presumes, the people who

organized her flight, knew until that evening that there would be so suitable a period immediately before them. Something else had evidently happened. It is possible that Melinda had received some kind of message, either in one of the other letters or from some contact she had had while she was out. Had it been at one of the shops she visited, one of the ordinary shops at which she was accustomed to buy the household goods? Or had she, during those fifty minutes, called at some inconspicuous little place—a tobacconist's, a stationer's, a bar, a dry cleaner's—that had been opened in Geneva for the express purpose of acting as an accommodation address for a Soviet intelligence organization and through which Melinda received her instructions? Or could she have made a telephone call?

Melinda's movements were, of course, not watched, and, despite the extensive inquiries made by M.I. 5, the Swiss police, and other organizations, nothing that throws any light on the mystery has been discovered.

But one thing is certain—on that evening Melinda had somehow been told that the date of her departure was very near. It is unlikely that the exact date was given her—any more than Donald and Guy Burgess seem to have known for certain, when they drove away from Beaconsshaw that evening twenty-seven months earlier, that they were leaving never to return—but she had probably been warned to be ready. Certainly she had been instructed not to say anything to anyone, nothing that could possibly give a hint of what

she was about to do. From that moment, Melinda was a tortured soul.

Only three days remained, only three more days in the security and safety of the free world. And on any of them Melinda, by a word, by a gesture even, could have saved herself and her children. But she said nothing, she told no one the terrible secret that must have weighed so crushingly on her. Actually the three days passed so busily that even now Mrs. Dunbar is not quite certain exactly what did happen. One fact has remained firmly fixed in her memory: Melinda tried persistently to persuade her to go away.

Since Donald's disappearance Mrs. Dunbar had, except for her trip to the States and another short holiday, been Melinda's inseparable companion and support. Yet on Tuesday morning, the day after their return from Majorca, Melinda suggested that it would be a "nice change" for her mother to go to London. Mrs. Dunbar replied reasonably that she had not the slightest wish to go to London so soon after her return to Geneva.

Then Melinda asked, "Don't you think it would be a good idea if you went to Paris for a little while to buy some new clothes?"

Mrs. Dunbar pointed out that, first, she did not want any clothes and that, second, Harriet was away from Paris and it would therefore be a stupid time for such a visit. Owing to the strikes that had paralyzed French communications during August, they had not heard from Harriet and Jay, but Mrs.

Dunbar knew they had planned to take a house in the country for August and September. Melinda was aware of this too, but nevertheless she went to the telephone several times to try to ring up Harriet at her Paris number, which did not reply. Despite this, Melinda continued to urge on her mother the need—which Mrs. Dunbar herself did not feel—to get away from Geneva for a time.

Eventually Mrs. Dunbar, who had earlier planned to go to stay with Harriet later in the year, said she would be going to Paris “some time after Fergus’s birthday,” which was on September 23.

“Oh, that will be too late,” replied Melinda.

“Too late for what?” asked a mystified Mrs. Dunbar.

Melinda did not reply.

Examining this full story of Melinda’s last days in Switzerland in the knowledge of what was so soon to happen, one might feel that her behaviour was sufficiently strange to awaken a suspicion that something was wrong, something out of the ordinary was in the air. Surely her demeanour, her actions, her words, were not normal? The answer is, of course, that for this unhappy, bewildered girl whose life had been so catastrophically overturned and who for a long period had been distraught, uncertain, tormented, there was no longer anything deeply unusual in this behaviour. It must also be remembered that neither Mrs. Dunbar nor anyone else close to Melinda ever had the slightest suspicion that she had been contacted, that anyone would want to contact her, or that she would in any circumstances contemplate going to

Donald. Without any such suspicion all that she did and said had no real significance; her actions were merely symptoms of her intense unhappiness and uncertainty.

Hardly once since Donald's disappearance had Melinda been able to make up her mind to anything without innumerable doubts, false starts, promptings from people near to her. And as far as Mrs. Dunbar then knew Melinda had told her everything, consulted her before every move. For some time Melinda's family and friends had been most carefully avoiding any reference to Donald; they hoped that she was slowly forgetting and the last thing they wished to do was to remind her of it all.

So, as I have said, the last three days—September 8, 9, and 10—passed rather busily in the normal preoccupations of a family which had just returned from a long summer holiday. There was the flat to be put in order, there were bags to be unpacked, clothes sent to laundries and cleaners, things to be bought for the house, and a new *femme de menage* to be engaged. Melinda seemed to be in and out of the flat the whole time, and by the evening was sufficiently tired to go to bed early. Mrs. Dunbar not only did not see very much of her, but contrary to usual custom had little occasion for the long talks they usually had together each night.

One thing that Melinda did struck Mrs. Dunbar as curious and unlike her daughter. On Thursday Melinda brought back from the dry cleaner three of her summer frocks that she had taken in on Tuesday. In the first place, it was unlike Melinda to be so prompt in having her clothes cleaned; she

was usually rather forgetful and inclined to leave everything to the last minute. Second, it was totally unlike her to take her own dresses without asking her mother if she too had something she would like cleaned, especially as they had both come back from their holiday with their dresses rather crushed and rumpled. On Thursday Melinda spent the afternoon at the beauty parlour, having her hair washed, cut, and set. There seemed to be absolutely nothing in this; it was a most normal and natural thing for a girl to do, most especially on her return from a seaside holiday, but again, this immediate visit to a beauty parlour was not what one would expect from Melinda. In the revealing light of later events, Melinda's actions on her return to Geneva were entirely consistent with those of a girl preparing herself for an important journey. But at the time they appeared entirely ordinary and attracted no attention.

On Thursday night, the last night she spent with her mother, Melinda clearly came very near to breaking down, very near to revealing what was happening. Had she done so, she would never have gone; her mother would have seen to that. Melinda's failure to confide in Mrs. Dunbar was, I think, one of the most tragic mistakes in the whole tragic story. But that is an entirely personal opinion.

Late that night, as they were going to bed, Melinda stood in the doorway between their two rooms "looking ghastly"—ill, tired, desperately worried. Suddenly, and with no connection with what they had been talking about, she said, "Oh, how I wish I had someone to advise me!"

Mrs. Dunbar had no idea what she meant. The only subject they had discussed that day on which it seemed likely that Melinda could want advice was the disposal of the house at Tatsfield, on which large annual payments had still to be made.

So her mother replied, "Well, Melinda, I have had certain experience with property in America, and although I don't know what happens in England I think I could advise you if you tell me exactly what's worrying you."

Melinda gave her mother an uncomprehending look, shook her head, and went into her bedroom and shut the door.

Was she about to tell her mother of the perilous step she was contemplating? Had she still not quite decided to obey the summons that had come or that she knew was about to arrive? Was she still in doubt? We simply do not know. Her mother had all along been her confidante—Melinda had not wanted to marry Donald before going back to America to tell her mother about him; she insisted on returning to her mother's home in the middle of the war to have her first baby; she called her mother to her when Donald disappeared. The urge to turn to her again must have been almost irresistible. But she held back. Something even stronger than her love for her mother, her love for her own country, her own way of life, was pulling her in another direction, and she dared not speak, for she knew that if she had even hinted that she was about to follow Donald and to take her children with her, Mrs. Dunbar would have immediately mobilized every security force in Europe and America.

Friday opened normally, with Melinda appearing no more depressed or preoccupied than usual. After breakfast she went off in her car to the big market, which was held twice a week in Geneva; on other mornings she would do the daily shopping at the ordinary small market near the flat. She was gone quite a while, and when she returned it was evident that something had happened: she was incandescent with excitement. The die had been cast; her decision taken; there were no more doubts.

She hurried into the flat, threw down her morning's purchases, and turned excitedly to her mother to tell her about the "two loveliest things" that had happened to her, as I have described earlier. We now know that this "chance meeting with an old friend from Cairo" was probably untrue, at least to the extent that if indeed someone Melinda had known in her Cairo days had been selected as the guide to take her to Donald, she knew that there was certainly to be no "week-end with the children at his villa at Territet." Was she playing a careful and cunning role? It would be so unlike Melinda, who, as her mother and close friends have repeatedly stressed to me, was not a person given to duplicity, was, on the contrary, frank and simple and a poor liar. Yet what is one to think—that even at this moment Melinda did not know what she was about to do? Her immediate actions are capable of two interpretations: either she really did think she was taking the children to the house of some old friends; or she thought she was taking them to meet a

father they had not seen for months and whose baby daughter had never set eyes on him.

After Melinda returned to the flat she declared that she must buy Pinkers a new coat and some new shoes, and she took the baby and Fergus with her and went off to the shops again. She returned some time later, showed her mother the things she had bought, put Pinkers to bed, and busied herself about the house. She was still in a state of some excitement. She was probably doing her own packing at this time.

Just before luncheon Mrs. Dunbar found that neither she nor Melinda had much money. She told Melinda to ring up the bank and find out their balance, and it was decided that after lunch, when the banks reopened after the midday break, Melinda would drive there and cash a cheque. But after lunch a reaction seemed to set in, and long after they had finished, Melinda sat at the table, playing restlessly with a half-empty glass of wine, deep in thoughts that, from the look of strain and tension on her face, were far from happy. Mrs. Dunbar had to remind her that she would be late if she did not hurry, and with a visible effort Melinda shook off her abstraction and drove off to the bank, where she cashed a cheque for seven hundred Swiss francs—at that time roughly sixty pounds. She arrived back just before three, the time she and the children were to leave, having paid a garage bill of fifty Swiss francs and bought some face powder, lipstick, and so forth, but having forgotten aspirin, which Mrs. Dunbar had particularly asked her to buy. She also had a parcel that, she

told her mother, contained a jersey dress she had bought. Most unusually, she did not open this to show it to Mrs. Dunbar. It is probable that, judging from the time she was gone and the things she had to do, this dress had been ordered beforehand. Melinda gave Mrs. Dunbar two hundred Swiss francs and probably had around three hundred and fifty francs remaining in her purse.

While they were having their luncheon Mrs. Dunbar casually asked Melinda who the Cairo friend she had met in the market was, with whom she was going to stay in Territet.

Melinda replied, "Robin Muir."

It meant nothing to Mrs. Dunbar, and in fact no one of that name has yet been traced. Yet it was a very plausible-sounding name—the kind of name one immediately associates with the Foreign Office or possibly the Army. When I first heard it, I, who had been in Cairo at the same time as the Macleans, was sure I knew someone called Robin Muir, yet I am sure now that I do not, however close the name may be to that of one or two of our mutual friends. Melinda also told her mother the name of the hotel in Montreux where Robin Muir would be waiting for them at four P.M., but this Mrs. Dunbar has never remembered. (Not that it matters, for it is highly unlikely that the meeting occurred in so public a place as a hotel lounge.)

When Melinda returned from her dash to the bank and the shops there was a new flurry of excitement. It was already a little after three, and they were not nearly ready. The baby

was awakened and dressed in her new woollen jacket and shoes; the boys put on grey flannel suits; Melinda herself appeared in a black skirt and white blouse, over which she wore a three-quarter-length bright blue Schiaparelli coat.

Mrs. Dunbar was horrified when she saw the skirt. "For heaven's sake, Melinda," she said, "you can't go away in that dirty skirt!"

So Melinda went off to change. Little Donald wanted to take some blue jeans Mrs. Dunbar had brought back from New York for him; and at the last minute they noticed that Pinkers' favourite doll had been left behind, and they got it for her.

At three-thirty they were ready. Mrs. Dunbar kissed the children good-bye and told Melinda to be careful. Melinda said she would and repeated that they would be back early on Sunday evening. There was nothing emotional or agitated in her demeanour; after the flurry and excitement of getting ready, she was calm and almost casual. In fact, in its ordinari-ness there was a striking similarity between her departure and that of Donald twenty-seven months earlier. No one could possibly have foretold that instead of going off to do exactly what she said she was going to do—spend a week-end with friends—she was starting on one of the most momentous and dramatic journeys any girl could make: self-chosen exile behind the Iron Curtain.

Her last words to her mother were, "Would you like me to ring you up when I get there?"

Mrs. Dunbar told her not to bother—but it would have been interesting to know what would have happened if she had said, “Yes, do, please.”

At three-thirty P.M. on Friday, September 11, Melinda drove off with her three children, taking with her not only the three large keys to the apartment in the rue des Alpes she was never to see again but also the only key to the letter-box. She was wearing the gold clips and pin that Mrs. Dunbar had bought her in Majorca. And, hanging over her shoulder, still in the case it had hardly, if ever, left, was the brand new Rolleiflex camera Mrs. Dunbar had given her.

That was the last glimpse Mrs. Dunbar had of her daughter.

The discovery that Melinda had taken all her clothes with her, which was not made until six weeks later, threw an entirely different light on her disappearance. No girl takes her entire wardrobe with her, winter as well as summer, if she is intending merely to spend a day or two with friends in the country. I do not myself think Melinda knew for certain that the expected call had come and that she was going far beyond the little village of Territet. But she certainly knew this was a possibility, and so she was prepared. If the expected instructions did not reach her over the week-end then she could without great difficulty have put her clothes back in the flat without attracting attention, for her mother was not the kind of woman who would notice details of this kind.

Mrs. Dunbar's original impression that Melinda had taken only a few of her possessions was primarily based on what

she saw her put into the car. She had seen Melinda leave the flat with only one suitcase, two large raffia carry-alls that they had brought back from Majorca, and a little red overnight bag that contained Melinda's toilet requisites. This, plus the books and toys and other belongings the children might have insisted upon taking with them, did not appear excessive for Melinda and the three children. The fact that the expensive American suitcase was deceptively roomy and could contain far more than on first sight appeared possible and that the carry-alls were deep and capacious, did not then strike Mrs. Dunbar. Nor did she then realize that if Melinda had planned to take all her clothes and wished to do so without attracting attention by the size of her luggage, there was nothing to have prevented her from packing other things into the car beforehand. The boys had been in and out of the flat several times between luncheon and the time they all drove off, and they could easily, at Melinda's request, have carried bags and parcels out to the car and stored them in the trunk. In short, had Melinda been bent on deception there would have been no one easier to deceive than her unsuspecting mother.

When it was definitely established that Melinda had disappeared Mrs. Dunbar was far too upset to see or think clearly. It was suggested that she should find out what clothes Melinda had taken with her, and she went to the closet in the rather dark passage in the flat to see what was there. A quick glance showed her Melinda's mink coat and evening dress. But nothing had been properly tidied away

since their return from their long holiday, and hanging in the same closet were dresses of her own. Further, before they left for Majorca, Melinda, as a letter she wrote to Harriet showed, had put away her winter clothes, so Mrs. Dunbar would not expect to see them there. In the chests of drawers were piles of clothes that Mrs. Dunbar assumed were Melinda's. On closer examination these proved to belong to the children. In fact, though Melinda had taken almost all her own clothes—suits, dresses, blouses, as well as the new nylon lingerie Mrs. Dunbar had brought back from New York for her, which she had never worn—she had taken almost nothing belonging to the children.

It is of course possible that Melinda did not take her clothes with her but that, after Mrs. Dunbar had flown to Paris, an emissary was sent to the empty apartment to collect them. Melinda had taken the keys and there would have been no difficulty in getting into the flat. But would it have been worth the risk? Not only would the concierge on the floor below have been more alert than usual but surely the Swiss police must have maintained a close watch on the premises. It is difficult to imagine Soviet agents risking discovery for the sake of a girl's clothes. But their audacity in this case was such that this possibility cannot be entirely discarded.

But these discoveries were made very much later. When Melinda and the children drove off so hurriedly on that sunny Friday afternoon it did not for a moment occur to Mrs. Dunbar that she would not see them again in two days' time. Even when they did not arrive on Sunday evening, she

was worried but not seriously alarmed. Alarm came on Monday morning, and then, as we know, she took steps to inform M.I. 5.

Her first attempt to get in touch with the authorities in London was not very successful. The British Consul-General in Geneva, Mr. E. T. Lambert, who had been extremely kind to Melinda, had recently left on promotion to the more important post of Consul-General in Paris, and Mrs. Dunbar did not know his successor. When she telephoned to the British Consulate at eleven-forty A.M. she had first to explain who she was, which she did by saying that she was the mother of Melinda Maclean, and she asked if she could speak to the Consul-General on an urgent matter. She was told she could not see anyone before two P.M., as all the senior members of the consulate had gone to the airport to meet the Lord Mayor of London.

Mrs. Dunbar waited in growing anxiety until after luncheon. Then she went to the consulate, which was only a short distance from her apartment. She saw one of the consuls and told him that her daughter, Melinda Maclean, a British subject, and her three children were missing and asked him to inform London immediately. He said her information would be "sent on to London through the proper channels." Mrs. Dunbar replied that before they had all left London M.I. 5 had asked her to let them know immediately if anything out of the ordinary happened. This was urgent, she repeated.

The official said, "Now, Mrs. Dunbar, you know we can-

not have men flown down from London on a wild-geese chase. I'm sure your daughter will return soon. But I will pass on your information through the proper channels."

Mrs. Dunbar returned to her apartment in despair. For the fiftieth time she went through her papers, but she could not find the telephone number she wanted. Finally she went to the telephone and asked the Geneva exchange to put her through to the Foreign Office in London. The call came through at once and she asked for Mr. Carey-Foster, to find that he was abroad. But she spoke to one of his assistants. She said she was Mrs. Dunbar, the mother of Melinda Maclean, and asked if the official to whom she was speaking knew who she was. He did, and she said she had to get into touch with M.I. 5 very urgently.

Forty minutes later a senior M.I. 5 officer telephoned her. She told him that Melinda and the children were missing, that they had gone away for the week-end and had not returned.

The officer said, "Would you like me to come over to Geneva?"

She said she would, and he replied that he would be there as soon as possible, that she was not to worry, and that it would be better if she told no one else. At this point Mrs. Dunbar had not informed the Swiss police, for she felt that it was imperative that the British authorities who had worked on the earlier Burgess and Maclean disappearance should be told first. Also, she was afraid that if she went to police headquarters she would have to make her explanations to a

junior officer who would possibly never have heard of the Maclean case.

That evening, less than a day after Mrs. Dunbar realized that something had happened to Melinda, two M.I. 5 officers flew to Geneva, where they arrived early Tuesday morning. They went to the flat in the rue des Alpes, heard Mrs. Dunbar's story, and with Swiss police officers drove off at once to Montreux, where they spent most of the day trying to find either the hotel at which Melinda had said she was to meet Robin Muir or the villa where she had expected to spend the week-end. All Tuesday Mrs. Dunbar waited in agony for news, but there was none. She had with her by now Harriet and Jay, who had flown down from Paris; and that night she decided to telephone to her other daughter, Mrs. Catherine Terrell, in New York, to break the sad news to her before she had the shock of reading it in the newspapers. And it was through this innocent and quite natural telephone message that the news of Melinda's disappearance reached the newspapers of the world, which had not before got wind of the new developments in the sensational Maclean case.

When Mrs. Dunbar's telephone call came through, her daughter was entertaining a woman friend who lived nearby. This woman's husband was a journalist who worked on a small New York newspaper and also as a tipster for one of the big news agencies. It was difficult for Mrs. Terrell not to tell her friend the reason for the unexpected telephone call

from a place so far away as Geneva, and indeed she was so obviously upset that her friend asked her anxiously what was the matter. Mrs. Terrell told her, and that night the friend passed the news on to her husband. He immediately telephoned his newspaper and agency. By Wednesday morning it was being spread rapidly over the world.

The immediate result in London was a flood of inquiries at the Foreign Office by journalists seeking confirmation or denial of the story. One imagines that the Foreign Office and the security officers pursuing the inquiry would have appreciated a far longer period of secrecy, but as the news had broken this was no longer possible, and a statement giving an accurate and surprisingly full summary of the known facts was issued from Whitehall. It said:

On Friday Mrs. Maclean—who had been living in Geneva for the past year at the home of her American mother Mrs. Dunbar in the rue des Alpes—said she was going to spend a week-end with friends who had a villa at Territet, at the other end of the Lake of Geneva.

She said she was to meet them at a Montreux hotel and would then be taken to the villa because she did not know where it was.

She left at 3 P.M. in her own car with the children and week-end luggage telling her mother she would be back early on Sunday.

As she had not returned by Monday and no message was received, Mrs. Dunbar got in touch with the Swiss police and telephoned the Foreign Office.

Neither the friends she was supposed to be meeting nor the address where she said she intended to stay have been traced. Swiss frontier authorities have no clue.

In view of possible bearing, two security officers concerned with the disappearance of Burgess and Maclean in 1951 flew to Geneva on Tuesday. Police of adjoining countries have been informed.

That was the official statement. But a Foreign Office spokesman made an extremely interesting comment at the time. He said that it was "entirely a matter for speculation whether Mrs. Maclean had left to join her husband." He emphasized that she was an "entirely free agent" and was under no obligation to report her movements. While the disappearance of any British national "was a matter for concern," the British authorities were in this case still anxious to acquire "any additional information" about the Burgess-Maclean case, and it was therefore "natural that two security officers"—whose names were not given—should have been sent at once to Switzerland, he said. Finally, there was "no evidence the disappearance was not voluntary."

This last piece of information was, at the least, gratuitous, for at that moment the Foreign Office was in possession of no evidence at all—either that the disappearance was voluntary or involuntary, whether Melinda had left of her free will or had been kidnapped or lured away. At the time the Foreign Office statement was issued all that was known of Mrs. Maclean and her children was that they had gone, and

only the slenderest clues pointing to where they had gone had so far been brought to light.

The first piece of solid information was obtained that day—Wednesday—when Mrs. Dunbar received the telegram sent to her in Melinda's name. It had been sent at eleven A.M., from the one-man branch office in Territet, an outlying suburb of Montreux. This was the place at which Melinda had told her mother she was going to spend the week-end.

Here I want to point out that the investigators appear to have missed a most valuable, and simple, chance of getting some line on the people behind Melinda's disappearance. She had told her mother she was going to Territet: Mrs. Dunbar had passed on this information at least twenty-four hours before the telegram was sent from the very place Melinda had indicated. Widespread investigations were in progress by the Swiss police and high-ranking British officers; yet no one seems to have thought of keeping a watch in Territet. There was nothing at all to guarantee that Melinda would actually go to Territet, and it is unlikely that she did so. But already there was a certain similarity in pattern between her disappearance and the earlier disappearance of Burgess and Maclean, and it would surely have been very worth while to keep one man in this small suburb, where any stranger would be quickly noticed!

The post-office clerk—who could not at first be found, for he had shut up shop and gone off to work on his farm—at once remembered the dispatch of the telegram, for at that season of the year the traffic at Territet was insignificant. It

had been handed in by a heavily made-up foreign woman, who had, presumably unintentionally, drawn attention to herself and the telegram by the fact that it was written in such bad English that even a Swiss clerk had to ask that certain small alterations be made. It is unlikely that even if the messenger—and she was certainly nothing more—had been found, she would have led the police to her superiors, but with a little foresight it is possible that valuable information might have been obtained. It was badly needed.

The next clue was found the following morning, Thursday, September 17, and it set the investigators on a trail that petered out on the borders of the Russian zone of Austria. But this clue—the discovery in a Lausanne garage of Melinda's black Chevrolet—most clearly indicated that Melinda had gone to join her husband. The proprietor of the garage told the police it had been left by a woman with three small children not long before seven P.M. on the previous Friday—six days earlier, that is. A ticket stuck beneath the windshield wiper indicated that it was to be called for the day after its discovery, Friday, September 18. This proved conclusively that some time after she left her apartment in Geneva Melinda knew positively that she would not be returning on Sunday evening, as she had told her mother. It also showed that she knew then that she was not going to spend the week-end with friends from Cairo in a villa at Territet. But whether she knew these things before she left home we do not know.

The discovery of the car only a hundred yards or so from

the Lausanne station soon led to the next step. Melinda and her children, it was found, had taken the six fifty-eight P.M. train from Lausanne to Zurich on Friday evening. She was identified by a ticket collector who had been on duty on the train and also by a Swiss professor who was travelling on it and who had noticed a worried-looking woman and her three children boarding at Lausanne. Evidence that Melinda and her family left the train at Zurich soon came to light.

For a day or two there were doubts about her next move, for she was wrongly identified as having been seen at Vienna station. What in fact she did was to catch the Arlberg express at Zurich, but to leave it at the Austrian town of Schwarzach Saint-Veit, forty miles from Salzburg, Saturday morning. Identification was provided by an unnamed American colonel who was travelling on the Arlberg to Vienna. He shared a first-class carriage with the Maclean family, who did not have sleepers, although it was a night journey. When he heard of Mrs. Maclean's disappearance he gave information to the American authorities in Vienna, who informed the Swiss police, who in turn told the French police, who passed it on to Mrs. Dunbar. Presumably the British authorities were also notified.

The colonel's description of the pathetic little family who travelled with him that night is far too vivid and accurate to leave any room for doubt. He remembered the two fair-haired little boys in grey flannel suits who told him they went to school in Geneva; the one large suitcase and the two raffia carry-alls from Majorca; Melinda and her clothes; and a

detail that is so wholly convincing that nothing else is really needed—the fact that she was wearing a rather cheap little masculine wrist watch. (Melinda, having broken the bracelet of her own watch, was using one that Mrs. Dunbar had bought for Fergus, an inexpensive watch of the kind one would normally give to a nine-year-old boy.) The colonel saw them leave the train at Schwarzach Saint-Veit around nine A.M. on the morning of Saturday, September 12.

If further identification were necessary, it was supplied by a porter at the Schwarzach Saint-Veit station. He had helped the Macleans off the train, had seen them go into the restaurant and then, about thirty minutes later, drive away in a large American car that had arrived while they were drinking their coffee. The driver was described as a slim man of average height who spoke German with an Austrian accent.

That was the end of the trail. Melinda, like Donald before her, had gone beyond the boundaries over which Western investigation could easily follow her. This fairly rapidly gathered evidence—for the inquiry started on Tuesday, September 15, and was concluded five days later—was considered convincing enough for the Swiss police to announce that the hunt was up, as it was clear that “no purpose would be served by a further search.”

The Foreign Office view was given in an announcement reported in *The Times* on Tuesday, September 22. It said:

It was stated at the Foreign Office yesterday that investigations into the disappearance of Mrs. Maclean, the wife of

Mr. Donald Maclean, one of the two missing diplomats, suggested that she had gone to Austria after leaving Switzerland. The two British security officers, who were sent to assist the Swiss police as soon as Mrs. Maclean's disappearance was reported, have now returned to London. It was emphasised that Mrs. Maclean had been throughout a free agent. She had made no appeal for protection. There was no charge or imputation to be made against her.

Certainly neither Melinda nor Mrs. Dunbar had made any "appeal for protection"; they had made none when they went to Beauvallon and yet they had been given it every moment of their month's holiday.

There are several points in the actual mechanics of Melinda's journey from Geneva to the Austrian frontier that have not been cleared up. In the first place, Melinda left home in her quite fast and powerful car at three-thirty P.M. on Friday afternoon. Her next verified appearance was at the garage in Lausanne just before seven P.M.—three and a half hours later. The distance between the two points is, however, only forty miles—not much more than three-quarters-of-an-hour's drive. What did she do and where did she go in the meantime? She gave herself, or was given, remarkably little time to park the car and conduct her little party—with a certain amount of luggage and a two-year-old child who had to be carried—from the garage to the station, which involved the descent of a precipitous flight of steps, a walk through a long tunnel, and the ascent of a similarly steep flight of steps on the other side. Somebody must have helped,

for it would have been quite impossible for Melinda and the two little boys to carry their luggage from garage to railway platform.

It is clear to me that it was during this time, this unexplained three hours, that Melinda saw the person who had been instructed to contact her and received her final instructions. It is almost certain too that the tickets for her long journey were given to her before she got to the station, for not only had she—as far as is known—barely enough money, but she certainly had no time to buy tickets at Lausanne. From what Mrs. Dunbar told me I estimated that Melinda left Geneva with around thirty pounds in Swiss francs—and she drew this money from the bank that afternoon at her mother's request, not at her own initiative. Had Mrs. Dunbar not noticed that she herself was short of cash, it is possible that Melinda would have set out on her journey with only a few francs in her purse.

My colleague Hugh McLeave, one of the *News Chronicle* crime reporters, who followed the trail from Geneva to Schwarzach Saint-Veit and who obtained the reliable and detailed identification by the porter at the little Austrian station, worked it out as follows: One first-class ticket for herself and two half-fare tickets for the boys, from Lausanne to Zurich, would cost seven pounds, eighteen shillings. The trip from Zurich to Buchs, on the Austrian frontier, would cost four pounds, six shillings, for the three of them, and from Buchs onwards another eight pounds, twelve shillings.

The total for the actual fares was therefore twenty pounds,

sixteen shillings, without taking into consideration any additional expenses such as meals, porters, and anything Melinda might have had to spend in Switzerland after she left the rue des Alpes and before she caught the train. It could be done, but it would have left a very small balance with which to face unknown adventures or any emergency if anything were to have gone wrong—as, for example, if Melinda had suddenly wished to go back to Geneva.

Mrs. Dunbar left Geneva on Friday, September 18, one week after Melinda disappeared, without examining the car, which at that time was still in the Lausanne garage. She had learned from the police and the press of some of the objects found in it—road maps, children's toys, and a book entitled *Little Lost Lamb*, but she had seen none of them. When she returned to Switzerland five weeks later with Harriet and Catherine, they went to the garage and took possession of the car. Various things then struck Mrs. Dunbar.

In the first place, the car itself, which when it was sent to meet them at the Geneva airport on their return from Majorca had been glitteringly clean, was now filthy, "as if it had been driven through a ploughed field." As photographs of the car taken the day it was found made it look clean, it was probably dirtied, the speedometer broken, the electric cigarette lighter pulled out and left alight and hanging down, and the battery emptied, during the police investigation or after they had finished it.

Also, among the pathetic, small heap of articles found inside the car were a cardboard box from Burkhardt's, the

well-known Geneva *patisserie*, and the remnants of a picnic meal. When had Melinda bought these, if it was she who did so? We know that Mrs. Dunbar had stood by the window of their Geneva apartment when Melinda, very late and in a great hurry, drove off on Friday afternoon and had seen her turn the car in the square before the house and take the Montreux road. This would have led Melinda away from, not towards, the centre of the town, where the Burkhardt shop is situated. As far as Mrs. Dunbar knew, Melinda had not bought any provisions during the morning. It looks as if they were supplied by the organizers of the flight, either because they knew that the Macleans had a long journey before them and that it was impossible to obtain dinner on the six fifty-eight from Lausanne to Zurich (which is a slow train, without a dining car) or possibly only to keep the children occupied while their mother went off somewhere—into a house, a café, a hotel, or even into a nearby field—to talk with the emissaries from Moscow and receive her final instructions. For it is clear that something, and something utterly decisive, happened during those missing three hours, very nearly Melinda's last hours in the free world.

This method of making the final arrangements, of confronting Melinda with the choice of going then and there or not at all—if indeed there was by then any safe possibility of turning back—ensured that she could have no communication with her mother, her friends, or the police. With the disappearance arranged as it was—on a Friday evening with a week-end ahead—she would not be missed until she was

beyond pursuit. Speed was obviously an essential part of the plan. There could be no hitch, no delay, for, as the rapidity with which Melinda's movements were traced clearly demonstrated, this girl with three small children in tow could not hope to pass unnoticed. Donald and Guy Burgess, two men, even two such unmistakable Englishmen, of whom Donald, because of his great height alone, would be easily remembered, could travel across the Continent without attracting any particular attention, without being spotted. But an American or British woman accompanied by two fair-haired little boys and with a two-year-old baby in her arms, a woman with a pale, anxious face and tragic dark eyes, who was travelling without a male escort, was bound to be noticed; she was certain to draw the attention of railway staffs—porters, ticket collectors, guards—even if, as was highly unlikely, she escaped the notice of her fellow travellers (as of course she did not).

But she did not even try to do so. Melinda as well as the boys talked without constraint to the American colonel in the carriage from Zurich to Austria, a fellow American who would inevitably remember them. The essential thing was obviously that they should make the relatively short journey with such speed that identification did not matter. They were certain to be missed by Monday at the very latest, possibly even on Sunday evening; there was certain to be an enormous hue and cry, with the entire British press as well as security officials from two or three countries on the hunt. What did it matter! The two days' grace was more than enough to en-

sure that no one could save Melinda and her children. So far as has been discovered, she was unaccompanied on her journey out of Switzerland. But it is certain that she was watched, carefully watched, by someone lurking in the background, ready to report immediately any suspicious movement, any sign of hesitancy.

Some time later an official of the French Sûreté Nationale offered me quite a different route for Melinda's flight behind the Iron Curtain. He said she went from Geneva to Berne and thence through Zurich to Saint-Gall. "She crossed Lake Constance in a motorboat at night and travelled via Meningen, Munich, and Pilsen to Prague, where she joined her husband, who is working there, in charge of all Western broadcasts by the Czechoslovak radio."

I suggested that although that seemed a plausible route, he could provide no evidence, while there seemed to be good proof that she went the other way.

"A carefully laid false trail," he said. "It was far too obvious."

When Mrs. Dunbar returned to Geneva she had searched the apartment from top to bottom in the hope that Melinda had at least left a message for her explaining why she had gone, even where she had gone. There was absolutely nothing.

"It's part of their system," she said bitterly to me. "Complete secrecy—no farewells, no explanations. It was the same with Donald."

But was it so absolutely sure that Melinda, if she left no

written message of her own, did not leave something to speak on her behalf?

Among the articles left behind in the car, as I have said, was a book. It was a large-format children's book: *Little Lost Lamb*. It was far from new. Inside the cover was a rubber-stamp inscription indicating that the book was the "Property of Norwalk, Conn. Schools, Washington School." Mrs. Dunbar had never seen it before. She is sure it had never been in their apartment at Geneva. It was far too grown up for the baby, Pinkers, and yet it was too young for Fergus or even Donald. Then why was it there? Why was it left so prominently displayed on the front seat of the car? Where did it come from?

The preface says:

When the little black lamb scrambled up the mountain-side by himself, he didn't think he would get lost. He was only having fun exploring.

But when it was time to go home, there was no little black lamb among all the other sheep. . . .

Then came a cry which the shepherd knew meant danger for all little lambs away from their mothers.

Was this not possibly Melinda's farewell message? Was she not perhaps the "little lost lamb," blindly yet fearfully, but possibly hopefully, following a trail into the unknown, but still terribly wanting her mother to know why she had gone? It may be wildly farfetched to read this implication into the presence of a book for which there may be a perfectly simple

and logical explanation. But it is so apt. For in truth Melinda Maclean had for months been a little lost lamb.

And that was the end of the trail: a dirty car with many of the accessories broken; some crumbs of cake and a piece or two of orange peel; an open road map of Switzerland; a few children's toys—and the *Little Lost Lamb*. There was nothing else to be done, and Mrs. Dunbar returned sadly to Paris to wait.

She did not have to wait long. Just before the end of October she received a letter from Melinda. It was undated and had no address or anything to show where it had been written. But it had been posted in Cairo, of all places, and the otherwise nearly illegible postmark clearly showed the date of October 24—just six weeks after Melinda and the children had driven off from the rue des Alpes. There is no suggestion that Melinda was in Cairo. There is not even the vaguest possibility that she had gone there; Cairo has nothing to do with Soviet Russia, and it would be one of the most difficult places in the world for a British woman and her children to be hidden.

Melinda was not in Cairo any more than Donald had been in Guildford when he wrote to her nine weeks after he disappeared, any more than Guy Burgess had visited London in December, 1953, to post his mother a Christmas letter. The Soviet agents who posted the letters probably imagined they were adding to the mystification of the English investigators; they might even in the case of Melinda's letter have been exercising a curious Russian sense of humour; perhaps they

imagined that security officers would be flown off post-haste to Egypt.

I cannot entirely feel, however, that the selection of Cairo was gratuitous. I feel it must have some hidden significance—so hidden that it has escaped everybody interested in the solution of the Maclean mystery.

The letter itself was short and infinitely pathetic. It opened, "Darling Mummy," and said "they" were "alright and well." She hoped "with all my heart" that her mother would understand how deeply she felt the "sorrow and worry" her departure would cause her. It said they all missed Mrs. Dunbar and would always think of her, and it asked her to believe that "in my heart I could not have done otherwise than I have done." It sent "our" love to Mrs. Dunbar, Catherine, and Harriet, and it ended, "Good-bye, but not forever. Melinda."

The letter was unmistakably in Melinda's handwriting, that characteristic, loose handwriting with letters of many of the words barely joined together and a kind of little dash in place of full stops. And although it was a letter she could conceivably have written in some circumstances—but not to her mother—it did not quite ring true. It was in this respect like the letter Donald wrote Melinda. It was probably the authorized text of an earlier draft that Melinda had had to submit to the scrutiny of Soviet Intelligence officers. The greeting "Darling Mummy" was one used frequently by Melinda in letters to her mother. But it was not like her to talk merely of "we" and "us" to include herself and the children—in referring to Fergus, little Donald, and the baby, all

of whom adored Mrs. Dunbar as she adored them, Melinda would normally have given them their names and would certainly have had something particular to say about them, not just the almost anonymous "we are quite alright."

The small, single sheet of notepaper on which the letter was written was of a rather curious and ugly greyish-blue. It was cheap, ordinary paper and could have been bought anywhere, but it was more Continental than English, and expert opinion is that it could have come from any little stationer's shop anywhere between Paris and Moscow. It could, for that matter, have been bought in Cairo too. There was nothing useful to be discovered from the letter itself—the paper, ink, postmark, or anything material—or its contents. It advanced the investigators not one inch along the tortuous paths of the Maclean story except in one respect: it was so clearly part of the same pattern, and its similarity with the timing and the contents of the letter Donald wrote Melinda confirmed that her disappearance was not fortuitous but another and possibly the final chapter in the mystery of the Missing Diplomats.

What was the real purpose of this letter? Taken at its face value, it was intended to allay Mrs. Dunbar's fears and to ask her forgiveness. But if that was the case, why wait so long, why leave Mrs. Dunbar in desperate anxiety for six weeks? And even then, the letter said so pitifully little, and it was obscure. What did Melinda mean when she said, "Please believe darling in my heart I could not have done otherwise than I have done," of which the clumsiness does not hide the sincerity? It is a phrase almost word for word the same as

one in Donald's letter to Melinda—one that meant absolutely nothing to her, as this meant nothing to Mrs. Dunbar. Quite possibly that tantalizingly obscure phrase holds the whole secret of the double disappearance.

But what *did* mean something to Mrs. Dunbar was the final line: "Good-bye, but not forever." For she is convinced that one day Melinda and the children will return, that Melinda will find some way of getting them out of the prison into which some emotion—misplaced trust? misplaced affection?—led them. How this will happen, Mrs. Dunbar does not know, but that it will happen, she is sure. But only Melinda and the children will come back—Donald has reached the point of no return.

PART FOUR

WHERE DID THEY GO?

Why did Donald Maclean disappear? Why did he desert his wife and children, his job—that enviable job in the Foreign Service that held so brilliant a future—and his country, to go over, as it must be presumed he did, to the implacable enemies of his own way of life? These are not steps a man takes lightly, and it is clear that for many months before the final decision Donald Maclean lived in such a terrifying agony of indecision and guilt that his health was affected. There can be no other explanation for his behaviour during the year prior to his sudden departure from England. Physically, he was exceptionally strong and rather boisterously healthy, and if his work and the conditions of his life in Washington and Cairo became irritating to his nerves and his principles, that alone was not sufficient to send him eventually to a psychiatrist. A “nervous breakdown” may be a common enough dip-

lomatic illness, but it is not one that many diplomats contract in the course of their duties. The secret was probably that a quite ghastly tug of loyalties was driving him practically out of his mind.

That Donald Maclean, who was by descent and upbringing an English, or Scottish, liberal, had had inculcated in him from early childhood a normal and proper love for his country cannot be doubted: the knowledge one has of his parents and his home prove this without a shadow of a doubt. But as he grew to manhood his love became increasingly critical. He still loved his country, but he was becoming exaggeratedly aware of its faults. And from this awareness he progressed along unhappy and obscure paths to a conflicting admiration: he became enamoured of Russia.

There is ample evidence at least of his early interest in Russia to be found in the extensive library he left behind at Beaconsshaw. For there, appearing rather abruptly after the ordinary children's books and schoolboy's books, are row after row of works on Russia. They are all dated in the early thirties—when he was in his late teens and early twenties—on the flyleaves. They extend from complete sets in English or in German of all the classical Russian novels—by Tolstoy, Dostoevski, Gorky, Turgenev—and Russian histories, to much more specialized and recondite works of the Russian revolutionaries, including Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin, down to the propagandist outpourings of the Soviet Union. The latter writings include not only massive volumes on politics and economics; Donald appeared interested in every

aspect of life under the Communists and had a great number of books on Soviet architecture, music, literature, the theatre, and the ballet. There are even such exciting masterpieces as "How Beautiful It Is to Live on a Collective Farm"! All appear to be much read, and all are inscribed neatly with his name and the date of acquisition. It is the kind of library one might expect to belong to someone who was or who planned to become an expert on Russian affairs, which, as far as I can discover, Donald did not. Nor, although he took a First in modern languages, did he speak or read Russian: French and German were his languages.

Donald Maclean was of the ill-starred generation that grew to maturity between the two World Wars and whose impressionable years were lived beneath the appalling shadow of fascism—a fascism that was rapidly becoming all-powerful in Germany and was obtaining a dangerous hold in some classes in England. This ideology produced sharp if divided reactions among the hundreds of thousands of ordinary, pedestrian young Englishmen who formed the great majority of the rising generation. But its influence on the minority of people with brilliant, sensitive minds, such as Donald's, was catastrophic, for it led them to doubt their own country and to look elsewhere for the world's salvation.

It was thus only natural that when Donald went up to Cambridge in 1931, at the age of eighteen, he gravitated towards left-wing circles, and his interest in them became progressively stronger as fascism rose to supreme power in Germany. In his latter years at Cambridge, Donald became a

Communist, in company with many hundreds of other liberal-minded young intellectuals, who did so not from any deep or lasting belief in Marxism but because to them communism was synonymous with anti-fascism. To defeat Hitler, they rallied to Stalin. The majority of these young people rarely consciously realized that communism was connected with a hostile political entity; they certainly did not realize that it was an ideology just as dangerous, ruthless, and destructive as the fascism it was fighting for eventual world supremacy. Nor did they pause to consider that the logical conclusion of the perilous path they were taking was a transfer of allegiance from England to the Soviet Union; they were carried away by their youthful indignation.

But Donald probably was aware of these implications. To him communism was not merely anti-fascism—although that was certainly an important aspect—it was an ideology, a way of life, that seemed to offer a better hope of the general good, of peace and security, than anything the Western democracies had to offer. Communism was not merely an influence in world politics; it represented to Donald a means of combating life's inequalities—a state to be successfully achieved in England by socialism in the years after World War II—and, for a man whose desire to help the underdog was real, if sporadic, that meant a lot. How far Donald was prepared to follow the orthodox communist doctrines in those days may possibly be judged by a passage he underlined heavily in Pokrovsky's *Brief History of Russia*, an English translation of which was published in 1933 by Martin Lawrence Limited, a

firm that specialized in books about Russia and communism. This *Brief History of Russia* has as its foreword a congratulatory letter from "V. I. Lenin to Comrade Pokrovsky." On page 145 of the English edition Donald underlined the following passage—almost the only page of the book so marked—and wrote in the margin, over his initials, "Hawarden, Dec. 25, 1933."

For we repeat that, like the bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia lived on the surplus product that was extracted by force from the peasant and the workman. A Communist Revolution would mean that it would have to give up its advantages, renounce all its privileges, and join the ranks of manual labour. And this prospect could be accepted only by a small number of the most sincere and devoted revolutionaries of the intelligentsia.

It would be tedious and unnecessary to detail all the many points of Marxist doctrine that Donald underscored in his extensive and clearly frequently read library of communist literature. It can be said that from this evidence Donald obviously took all of communism extremely seriously in the years between 1930 and 1935. And his beliefs, on the international side at least, must have strengthened and pushed down deep roots as the fateful, shameful years of the early thirties went by and fascism rode roughshod over much of Europe, while England, France, and America stood meekly by, satisfying their consciences with halfhearted and entirely ineffectual protests.

One might have expected Donald to give some more drastic proof of his sympathies as during the next few years totalitarian aggression swept all before it—as Mussolini attacked Abyssinia, as the Japanese invaded China, as the Fascists and Nazis helped Franco wage the horrifying civil war in Spain, and as in Europe Hitler went from triumph to triumph. But something happened to Donald. He had gone up to Cambridge with the idea of qualifying for the Foreign Service. Around 1933 he was so disgusted by the spinelessness of the Western democracies in general and of his own country in particular that he seriously considered giving up his planned career and going to work in Russia. But quite suddenly he reverted to his original plan, and, after taking his First in modern languages, he sat for the Foreign Office examination in 1935, passed without any great distinction, and was accepted into the Foreign Service. Despite his First, his languages were sound rather than brilliant, and the remarkable ability he was to show later was not apparent at the time—possibly Donald was one of those people who mature slowly and who do not shine in examinations. But even in those days he had strong backing, mainly because he was the son of a highly respected public figure, a former leader of the Liberal Party, and a man whose reputation was of the highest. With this backing and background, Donald got in where other candidates with similar examination results might well have failed.

For the next three years Donald worked at the Foreign Office. It is difficult to find any particular traces of his life in

London during those days. He lived modestly, for he had no money outside of the modest salary paid him by the Foreign Office. It is possible that this relative penury had an influence on Donald's outlook, for although it is strictly true that in these days it is possible to be a member of the Diplomatic Service without private means, one in this position is still at a disadvantage.

In 1938 Donald was appointed Third Secretary at the British Embassy in Paris; the following year he met Melinda, and in 1940 they were married.

Of the Paris years there is some evidence: it is neither complete nor conclusive; it is in fact negative and merely suggests that by this time Donald's interest in communism had disappeared or was dormant. Melinda told me that in those early days in Paris, when she and Donald and their friends of many nationalities sat up half the night in Left Bank cafés, discussing everything under the sun, she never heard Donald talk about communism; and neither then nor through the rest of their lives together did he ever express any communist sympathies. An examination of his library provides the rather astonishing information that during Donald's Paris period—1938 to 1940—he appeared to have bought and read nothing more revealing than French novels of all kinds, some of them of doubtful literary value but possibly possessing other attractions, and a few standard and uninspired works on French politics.

Then followed the war years in London, another period on which I find little evidence of anything—except Donald's

extreme hard work in the prevailing conditions of danger and discomfort. It would be surprising if anyone in Donald's position and holding his liberal beliefs had, at this particular time in our relations with the Soviet Union, no contacts with "our gallant Russian allies." But if he did, there is no suggestion that they were anything more than the normal relationships between people fighting on the same side. The fact that pro-Soviet sympathies were then not only respectable but laudable, *comme il faut*, must in retrospect, during the very different years to come, have appealed to Donald's cynical sense of humour.

In 1944 opened the American period. I am convinced, on what I am prepared to admit is entirely unsatisfactory evidence, that this year marked the crisis in Donald's life. It was not long after he arrived in Washington as acting First Secretary at the British Embassy, and about the time he was made acting head of Chancery, that the war came to an end, and with it the end of Russia's cooperation with the West—although this was not then appreciated by the man in the street. The struggle for world domination was on, and although technically Russia was still an ally, in high official circles she was already the unnamed enemy. Around 1944, as was to be shown by the Gouzenko revelations in September, 1945, the communist espionage ring, of which the foundations had in many cases been laid earlier, began to get down to work in earnest. Likely agents were cautiously sounded out, and if they responded to the veiled overtures they were enrolled in the movement. The Russians were too clever to

place their trust in professional spies or to use any of the hordes of known Communists who form so potentially dangerous a fifth column in all Western countries. Whenever possible they chose men and women who had at one time been in sympathy with the communist cause but whose behaviour and attitude since had been such that they were not regarded with suspicion in their own countries. And who better than the idealistic young intellectuals who had become Communists in the early thirties to fight fascism, as they had every right to do, but had later renounced or simply discarded communism as no longer necessary?

I suggest that the Russian Intelligence Service kept a very close watch on the careers of any of these former university Communists, particularly those who had seemed sincerely to support the true Party doctrine and had not been merely anti-fascists. I suggest further that any of these men who have since risen to positions that place them in possession of information valuable to the Soviet Union are in constant and terrible danger, particularly as misplaced idealism might lead them to believe that the threat to world peace does not come from the East. Their danger is even more acute if there is anything in their private lives that renders them vulnerable. It would be as foolish as it would be wicked to suggest that anyone who ever had any connections with communism, even former active members of the Party, should remain eternally under suspicion or should be barred from taking their rightful places in the life of their country. Only a tiny minority carry their flirtation with communism to the point

of treachery to their own people—and even they, alas, do so usually from the highest of mistaken motives. It is just that Soviet Intelligence agents, in their search for men and women who could be suborned, coerced, or blackmailed into supplying them with the information Russia so badly needs, would be most likely to approach this special class first.

In the middle forties, in the days between the end of the Second World War and the commencement of the cold war, Russia was concerned above all with atomic information. The special spy ring set up in Canada had that as its main objective, and, naturally, scientists and technicians working on atomic projects were being sought. But ordinary spying, the ferreting out of the West's military, political, and economic secrets, went on apace and was also of considerable importance; what might be termed a by-product of our possession of the atomic bomb, our atomic policy, had high priority. These concerns made members of the diplomatic service valuable to the Russians and likely to be approached if there was just a hint that they were approachable.

Was Donald Maclean so approached? I do not know; I do not think anyone knows. It seems impossible from the appointments he held before his flight that the authorities had any suspicion of him. And afterwards, when it became fairly clear that he had gone behind the Iron Curtain, none of the extensive inquiries immediately instituted into his past life produced any solid evidence against him.

But there are two inescapable facts.

The first fact is that he did disappear; official opinion is that

he is behind the Iron Curtain. I do not believe the authorities know where he is or exactly what he is doing. But in the House of Commons on January 24, 1954—thirty-five months after Donald fled from Britain—Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, said in reply to a question: "If anyone were to presume that Maclean and Burgess are behind the Iron Curtain, he would probably be right." That is the only positive statement on the whereabouts of the missing men yet to have been made by the British government—grudging, guarded, and inadequate though it is.

The second fact is that Donald sent two thousand pounds to Melinda through Mrs. Dunbar. Donald left his home at Tatsfield on May 25, as hard up as ever and leaving debts behind him; the money was sent by Swiss banks on August 1—an interval of sixty-seven days, from which should be deducted the time it took Donald to get from Tatsfield to wherever it is behind the Iron Curtain he went (probably Moscow) and also the time it took for the arrangements to be made to send a messenger to Switzerland to despatch the money. Neither period need be long, but together they probably cut the actual working time in which he might conceivably have earned the money to around sixty days, two months.

Was that possible? Is it feasible? Obviously not. There remain two possibilities: first, that he was paid in advance for services to be rendered; second, that he was being paid for past services. Which is the more likely?

The combination of these two facts—that Donald deserted

to Russia, or possibly but improbably to one of the communist satellites, and that in a remarkably short time he was in a position not only to send Melinda a large sum of money, but also to obtain permission and assistance from his new masters to do so—points in one direction, and one only: Donald *was* approached by Russian agents and *did* work for them, probably long before he fled. It might be possible to invent a whole set of theories to fit these circumstances and yet produce an answer less grievously distressing to his family and his many friends, less inconceivable to almost anyone who knew Donald, but none would, I feel, fit so truly.

If these deductions are correct, then it is likely that Donald was approached by Soviet agents while he was in Washington. By this time he had behind him nine years of excellent, exemplary service, during which time his reputation had risen to the point when he was, at the age of thirty-one, the white hope of the Foreign Office. He was warmly welcomed at the British Embassy in Washington; and even before he arrived he received a charming letter from his ambassador, Lord Halifax, who had been a friend of his father, saying how glad he was that Donald was joining his staff. Donald had been married for four years to an American woman, and he went to her country for the first time full of enthusiasm, well content with life.

But although his reputation increased and he received two promotions, something went wrong in America. At first he was finding his feet in a new world, and he was extremely busy. During the first year in Washington he was practically

a bachelor, for he had left Melinda in New York with her mother—which he need not have done and of which the Foreign Office would probably have taken a poor view—and was able to lead his own life. He managed to make many new friends, and he was always a popular and welcome guest, especially as he was an unattached man in a city where men were at a premium. But gradually he seemed to tire of the life he was living—of being endlessly social, endlessly entertained by people who, if they had different names and slightly different faces, were obviously cut from exactly the same pattern—and he began to frequent a new milieu.

An interesting letter he wrote Melinda, which is dated merely September 1, but was probably written in 1945, says:

Nico remarked on my fondness for the craggier characters here; I think it is because I get utterly sick of the game of personalities within our own circle; everything has been said and laughed at fifty times over. Fred & Co. can't play because they don't know the rules, which is an attraction in itself. This doesn't mean that Fred & Co. are better company or more admirable than John, Nico, Bill and so forth. But they have an advantage in not suffering from group introspection and are in that sense freer in their choice of view of the world. How they use their freedom depends on them—pretty badly I dare say. You yourself object to this continuous tracing of people's exact social history and behaviour. I think if you are going to talk about most English individual personalities at all, you have to include them to get anywhere near a true explanation of their nature. But I am rather fed

up with the logic of personalities altogether. Anyhow I will write and tell you how the bridge game goes!

Yours in hope, charity, and trust in the
middle middle classes,

D.

There is nothing very serious in that. All it does is show Donald's growing distaste for the usual circles in which diplomatic life is lived, and it is in itself by no means a bad idea—indeed it might produce a refreshing and valuable new approach to international problems if Western diplomats did go out into the streets and meet the “common people” of the countries to which they are accredited. But they do not, and Donald's “fondness for the craggier characters” marks him out as “different,” even “difficult.” At the time, however, these feelings did little harm to Donald and none to his promising career; they could not hurt him at any time, unless he carried them to exaggerated lengths and refused to meet the many boring and unattractive people that men in Donald's position have to meet. But these convictions were soon joined by a set of feelings far more dangerous for a British diplomat in the United States to have. Donald began to acquire a marked dislike for America and most Americans and an utter distrust of American policy and intentions.

Donald had a completely two-sided approach to life. It was thus perfectly possible for him to dislike the circles in which he ordinarily moved and at the same time continue to enjoy the material advantages that only they could fittingly provide. His ideas might be rough, but he appreciated smooth

living. Similarly, he was a conscientious and hard-working servant of the British government, although he was usually utterly opposed to its policies.

There was always one guiding principle, however, to which Donald remained steadfast, even if it was sometimes obscured: he believed in peace and he believed in human liberties. Deep down in his heart, Donald was a reformer—he wished to remake the world. In this there was a marked similarity between his dreams and those of the atomic spies Fuchs and Nunn May, of whom Alan Moorehead remarks in his book *The Traitors*:

And in their secret hearts, as we now know, both of them thought they had a mission to reform the world.

It was this reformatory zeal more than anything else, I feel, that made Donald a Communist in the early thirties, when he was still young enough to believe that applied communism had any connection with pure communistic ideals. And it was this, I am convinced, that lay at the bottom of his flight behind the Iron Curtain in 1951, although there were still many bridges to be burned before he eventually went. But in those far-off days in Washington, so soon after the end of a war for which we are all still paying, Donald sensed not only the beginnings of the wide attack on human liberties which reached its culmination in the triumph of McCarthyism, but also the vague birth pangs of the policy that has led to the United States' being dubbed "warmongers" in communist circles all over the world.

Was it this inner struggle or some inherent weakness that sent Donald to seek relief in drink? I do not know. But the fact is that it was in Washington that Donald really began to drink heavily. (His drinking orgies in Paris had been more youthful exuberance than anything else, although he may have carried it rather far.) There is ample evidence on this point, not only from Melinda and her family but from many completely unbiased and reputable observers. And if there was anyone who should not drink heavily, it was Donald. Under the influence of alcohol this quiet, gentle, amiable man changed completely; he became violent in word and in action and seemed to lose all control.

There is another and even more dangerous result of Donald's drinking, which I approach with the utmost diffidence and would prefer not to discuss were it not an integral part of this tragic history—under the influence of drink Donald exhibited homosexual tendencies. This is a curious but not uncommon phenomenon in men who have strongly repressed homosexual impulses. It is probable that Donald was aware of his tendencies towards homosexuality and kept them strictly under control until that control was dissolved in alcohol. This side of his life became more pronounced in Cairo a few years later, and it was one of the problems he took to the psychiatrist to whom he went for treatment after his breakdown. And, as a letter I quoted earlier shows, this doctor was "a bit baffled."

The picture is now complete and Donald's pitiful vulnerability exposed. Here was a British diplomat who had been a

former Communist; who was in a responsible position; who was known to be at odds with his government's policy and still more so with that of the United States; who believed in and was ready to fight for peace; who was an idealist and a reformer with a penchant for the ordinary people and a deeply ingrained urge to help the underdog; and who had homosexual leanings and was a heavy drinker. Must he not have appeared an ideal contact to the ruthless, cold-hearted agents of a country ready to take advantage of any human weakness or any misplaced idealism in its implacable determination to dominate a world in which such weakness would obtain extremely short shrift?

Donald on all counts was a practically perfect "approachee," if advantage could only be taken of just the right conjunction of the various elements in his character. But the timing had to be perfect; for, on the other side of the picture, Donald had sterling qualities. He had a strong sense of duty, was responsible and painstaking, and was in many ways a man of unquestioned patriotism. Dr. Karl Fuchs had many of the same qualities, and his patriotism was even fiercer, for it was irrigated by a feeling of gratitude to England for adopting him when fascism drove him from his own country. And that did not prevent him from being even more thoroughly a traitor than was Donald, if treachery can be measured by the harm it does, for Fuchs had much more valuable information to give.

What had Donald to offer? Some weeks after he disappeared, a State Department spokesman in Washington stated

that Donald Maclean had been a member of the committee that controlled the wartime exchange of information between the United States and its partners in the development of the atomic bomb. He said further:

Since 1946 there has been no exchange of information concerning fissionable materials, production processes, weapons technology, and the development of stockpiles of fissionable materials and weapons. Maclean had information of Canadian, United States, and British atomic patents for peacetime uses, and amounts of uranium available to the three countries at that time. Some of the information available to him in 1947 and 1948 (when he was Secretary of the Combined Policy Committee concerned with atomic energy policy) was classified and would have been useful at that time to the Soviet atomic energy department and strategic planners.

Because of the changes in the rate and scale of the United States programme in the intervening years the information available to him then would not now be of any appreciable aid to the U.S.S.R.

This statement was made to appease fears that Maclean and Burgess had taken with them in their flight behind the Iron Curtain documents or information of use to the Russians. But it shows that during his time in America Donald was in possession of information on the West's atomic *policy*, which would be a valuable supplement to the highly technical information on the production of atomic bombs supplied by Nunn May, Fuchs, and other so far undiscovered spies. In

addition, there would be very little that Donald did not know about broader questions of Western policy.

For most of the time he was at the embassy in Washington Donald was head of Chancery, which might be described as highest administrative officer, and, on that level, the ambassador's right-hand man. Number Two in an embassy is the minister, who is, however, concerned more with actual diplomatic and policy-making issues; the head of Chancery is the funnel through which all information flows. Donald would see all incoming and outgoing telegrams and documents concerning his territory and probably many of more general interest, except those specifically marked "for the eye of the ambassador only." And it is quite likely that ordinarily the ambassador would eventually show many of these documents to his head of Chancery. Donald therefore was extremely well informed on a whole range of matters that would have been at least useful for Russia to know. The same thing applied, though not quite to the same extent, because of the lesser importance of the territories, in Cairo, where he was also head of Chancery for a time. Only in the six months prior to his disappearance, when he was head of the American Department at the Foreign Office, would Donald have had to make some effort to find out what was going on.

There is no evidence that Donald was a traitor, in the sense that he passed on information to Russian agents. His flight and what happened afterwards are grounds for legitimate suspicion that he was; and this his three-years' silence seems

to confirm. For if his flight had some more innocent explanation, if, for example, it was a self-imposed mission in the cause of world understanding, why has he remained silent, why has he not reassured his unhappy family? It is of course a moot point whether his desertion of his post as a senior official of the British government to go over to the enemy—even an undeclared, unofficial enemy—does not in itself constitute treachery of some kind, whatever else he may have done.

If Donald was a full traitor, then, as I suggested earlier, I am sure the first steps in treachery occurred in the United States between 1944 and 1948, probably not before the middle of that period. They must have been taken several years before his flight, which, one supposes, was the end of his mission, either because he had ceased to be useful, was in danger of being exposed, or even possibly because he insisted that he would be more valuable to the Russians in Moscow than in London. Even the initial steps must have taken time, for the signing up of an enemy agent is not accomplished with the same celerity as the taking on of a junior clerk. An approach would have to be cautious in the extreme—so cautious that the man or woman approached would not even know it was happening—and then there must surely be a long interval while the victim makes up his mind, and a certain period while he is tested for good faith, if such an expression is permissible in this context.

As we know, Donald had been a fairly heavy drinker right from his Paris days. But the bouts of wild drunkenness that

culminated but did not end in his precipitate return from Cairo in May, 1950, seemed to have their beginnings around 1947. They were sporadic and sufficiently infrequent for them to escape the official notice of his superiors, and they were followed by days of bitter remorse. Donald was excessively difficult to live with, and Melinda remembered the four years in America as possibly the most miserable period in her far from happy married life. She was not a chauvinistic American, but Donald's criticisms of her country became savage and unrestrained, and he seemed to be trying to influence her.

"I could criticize America; there's lots to criticize," she once said to me. "But I do so with love and affection; Donald did so with hatred."

However, Melinda and her family found it impossible to believe that Donald was a traitor then or at any other time. Among the papers he left behind—and he appears to have left everything except his passport—was his commission as a Second Secretary in the Foreign Service. This is a truly imposing parchment bearing the signature "George R.I."—the present Queen's father—in the top left-hand corner and that of Lord Cranborne at the bottom. This is what it says:

George the Sixth by Grace of God, of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India Etc. Etc. Etc.

To All and Singular to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting! Whereas it appears to Us to nominate some Per-

The Missing Macleans

son of approved Industry, Fidelity, and Knowledge, to perform the functions of Second Secretary in Our Diplomatic Service at any of our Embassies or Legations abroad or in the Department of Our Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:

Know Ye therefore that We have constituted and appointed, as We do by these Presents constitute and appoint Our Trusty and Well beloved Donald Duart Maclean Esquire, to be a Second Secretary in Our Diplomatic Service at any of Our Embassies or Legations abroad or in the Department of Our Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as aforesaid: Giving and Granting to him in that Character, all Power and Authority to do and execute all necessary Writings, Memorials, and Instruments, as also to assist Our Ambassador or Minister at the place where he may be appointed to reside, or Our Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in all things which may belong to the duties of such Second Secretary as aforesaid. And we therefore request all those whom it may concern, to receive and acknowledge Our Said Trusty and Well beloved Donald Duart Maclean as such Second Secretary as aforesaid, and freely to communicate with him upon the things that may appertain to the Affairs of Our Embassy or Legation at the place where he may be appointed to reside, or to those of the Department aforesaid.

Given at Our Court of Saint James the Twelfth day of February in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Forty-one and in the Fifth Year of Our Reign. (With effect from the 15th day of October 1940).

By His Majesty's Command

"How could anyone be disloyal to that?" Mrs. Dunbar asked me with tears in her eyes.

The Cairo period followed much the same pattern as the one followed in Washington. The first half—less than a year, as Donald was only in Cairo for twenty months—was quiescent, and Donald seemed if not happy at least calm. Then followed months in which drinking became progressively more violent—and the remorse that followed more profound. But once again, until the final episode, in which quick thinking by Melinda or by both her and Donald forestalled inevitable reprimand if not actual disgrace, Donald's behaviour escaped official notice, although in certain circles it was common gossip. There could have been many reasons for his drinking—after all, thousands of men drink to excess without having anything on their consciences, without being traitors.

But it does seem probable that Donald was experiencing in all its bitterness the truth of the assertion that once the Communists get someone into their power, they do not easily let him go. It looks as if Donald, probably in a fit of despair at the stupidity of his world, had in Washington agreed to work for Russia. Only one small piece of information, possibly relatively unimportant in itself, would have been sufficient to place him eternally at the Communists' mercy. These men are as patient as they are cunning, and it may be that Donald, like other victims before him, thought he had escaped—until suddenly the screws were applied again. Russia's weapon against him would have to have been blackmail, the threat of exposure, for it is certain that Donald accepted no money

from them, was not paid for his information. Not only does his state of perpetual insolvency prove this, but it would in any case be unthinkable: Donald, if he were a traitor, was one out of conviction, as were Fuchs and Nunn May, and certainly not for gain.

But either way Donald's life must have been growing steadily almost unendurable. It would have needed a far tougher, far more ruthless character than Donald to be able to live and work among people who loved and admired him without having most grievously on his conscience the knowledge that—to their way of thinking—he was betraying them. This dilemma was more than enough to account for his drinking. It was only surprising that he managed to appear so normal and that he could so well conceal his inner anxieties when he was sober. There was indeed a kind of withdrawnness and watchfulness about him at this time. But then one imagined only that this was the result of the cares of office, of the increasing responsibility of his position, of his own increasing years.

One would have thought, however, that a man of Donald's intelligence would have had at least some doubts about Russian policy and intentions as the forties drew to a close and the second half of the century opened on a confused and divided world. Had the communist virus taken too firm a hold, the poison sunk too deeply into his system, to permit any doubts? Or had he doubts? Was that perhaps the real cause of the unbearable strain on his nerves? Had Donald awakened to the realization that the Soviet Union was an even

greater menace to human freedoms than the democracies he was intending to forsake? Had he doubts, about which he was no longer in a position to take any action? If he had, one can only pity him, for his life must indeed have been unendurable.

It is possible that the services Donald is presumed to have rendered the Soviet Union were not entirely, or even at all, in the way of passing on useful information. Two kinds of agents are used by the Communists: first, those who obtain secret information—the spies—and second, those who seek to influence Western policy to bring it into line with Soviet plans—what one might call the “prodders,” or underground communist lobbyists. This second category is obviously the smaller, and the more difficult to recruit for, as its members must be in relatively senior posts, otherwise they could exert no influence. Donald was in such a position. As head of Chancery he was the right-hand man to successive British ambassadors in Washington and in Cairo. There is a suggestion in Foreign Office circles that, in the latter post, Donald did most cleverly and imperceptibly influence British policy in the Middle East in the way the Soviets wanted it to go. I do not for a moment suggest that Donald was able to formulate British policy or was able to do more than divert it here and there. As I have said, he was most strongly opposed to the official British policy in that part of the world. He was, moreover, a passionate Zionist—which must have added to the mental difficulties of his life in Egypt—and Soviet policy during the years Donald was in Cairo was pro-Zionist!

If this was Donald's role, it would make his flight to Russia far more explicable. Let us, however, leave that for the moment.

During the six-months' sick leave Donald was granted by the Foreign Office he continued to present his two faces to the world. Some people found him completely normal and could not understand the need for leave or for treatment; others were shocked by his appearance. Some of his friends and acquaintances never saw him drunk or even drinking heavily; others rarely saw him sober. He had managed, with the facility—was it charm or influence or just the camaraderie of the Foreign Service?—that had seen him safely through so many sticky situations, to have his own way about his treatment. Instead of being put in the hands of an official Foreign Office practitioner and possibly going into a clinic, he went to a private psychiatrist. He enjoyed his sessions with her, and although the future was to show he was by no means fully cured, she did him a lot of good. Even towards the end, however—according to friends who accompanied him to the doctor's office—he occasionally turned up for his appointments with bottles of whisky in both his overcoat pockets.

At the end of six months Donald obtained a certificate to affirm that he was fit for work—and a recommendation that he should continue his treatment, which he did not follow. As I understand it, and it must be remembered that members of the medical profession do not discuss their patients with third parties, Donald had gone to the psychiatrist for advice

on means of curing his excessive drinking. He declared later that the psychiatrist told him that he drank because of a guilt complex, and this was ascribed to his treatment of Melinda. He told friends at this time that he could not bear the sight of Melinda, that she got on his nerves to such an extent that he took refuge in drink, and then behaved so badly to her that he was overcome with guilt—and drank even more. Similarly he suggested that it was irritation with Melinda that had turned him to homosexuality, which is sheer nonsense. Had it been true that he had completely ceased to love her and was unbearably irritated by her, he would quite possibly have sought consolation with other women; but dislike of one particular woman—his wife—does not in itself turn a normally sexed man to homosexuality.

I do not believe this story of Donald's. I think that right from the beginning of their affair in Paris, right through their married life, Donald behaved with extraordinary irresponsibility towards Melinda. He was on all counts a completely irresponsible husband; he was selfish and self-centred; he had a mother complex and had been badly spoiled. But I think he loved Melinda after his fashion, and he was far more dependent upon her than he cared to admit to himself. That he had a "guilt complex" is unfortunately only too true, but it was caused by something far more grave than marital misunderstandings.

At the end of his six-months' leave Donald went back to the Foreign Office. But, quite characteristically, he went back on his own terms. For reasons of which I am unaware

he had decided that, regardless of the financial loss—a consideration which was unimportant to him—he did not want to go abroad again for some time, and he asked for a post in London. Despite the stories of his Cairo days, which must by this time have percolated through to the Foreign Office, he obtained the appointment of head of the American Department, for which, although it was not an especially exciting or important post, there was keen competition. In this as in other matters he had powerful backing, due partly to his ability and partly to the really extraordinarily high reputation of his father and the esteem in which Maclean, Senior, was still held by many important men and women, but not entirely to either. In this position, as head of a department, Donald would still have seen the majority of the day's telegrams between the Foreign Office and the embassies and legations abroad—or he could have if he wished to—but the detailed information that he could have obtained *en poste* would not have been easily accessible to him. Certainly he would have little opportunity of influencing policy.

At the end of another six months Donald Maclean disappeared. Why was this particular moment chosen for his flight to Russia? We shall probably never know the exact truth until he tells his own story—if that ever happens. (In any case, one of the most curious aspects of a mystery that bristles with enormous interrogation points is the profound silence that has enshrouded it from the other side of the Iron Curtain.) Granted that the deductions so far are broadly correct, there are two possibilities.

The initiative for Donald's flight may have come from Donald himself; for reasons at which we can only guess, he perhaps wanted to go to Russia. If this was the case, there are various motives for his desire to leave England. He might have felt that he could be more useful to the cause that I believe him to have had close to his heart—world peace and understanding between East and West—by going over openly and working with the Russians from the Russian end. It might be that he felt his utility to the Soviet government was diminishing in his new post.

As against this, he himself asked to work in London. The Soviet Union brings an almost Oriental patience to its handling of international affairs, and if one of its agents found himself temporarily in a position in which his utility had decreased, Moscow would probably be quite ready to wait until better opportunities came along, as would certainly have happened in Donald's case. Then, too, Donald might have realized that he was nearing the end of his tether, that he could no longer continue his double life. Perhaps he felt that he wanted to serve the cause of world communism but that he could no longer do so as a traitor among his own people. Yet he may have been ready to work inside Russia.

The other alternative is that the initiative came not from Donald but from the Communists, that they ordered him to be ready to make a swift, secret flight to Moscow. The only valid reason I can see for this hypothesis is that his Russian masters feared that Donald was becoming dangerous to them; that the strain under which he had been living for so long, and

which no medical treatment could remove, might before long lead him to break down and confess—and at the same time reveal details of his contacts in Western countries—in other words, that in Moscow's view Donald was no longer "secure."

So far as can be ascertained, the British government had no suspicions of Donald, but it would seem that some people in the Foreign Office were beginning to feel a little unsure of him politically. For a long time he had been opposed to most aspects of British foreign policy, and he had not troubled to keep his views to himself. And the fact that these vague doubts were beginning to be entertained may well have been passed on to Moscow by other agents in London—of whom there are probably a large number.

The actual flight itself is remarkable in almost all its aspects. It has been suggested that it bears all the marks of panic, that it was not prearranged but improvised at the last moment on the receipt of some sudden warning that exposure was at hand. The facts do not support this theory. I feel that neither Donald nor Melinda knew for certain when they left their respective homes on those days twenty-seven months apart that they were never to return. They had both been warned to be ready to leave on the receipt of precise instructions. Those instructions were probably not given them until they reached what they had imagined was to be merely a preliminary meeting. But when they arrived they were given no time or possibility of going home, no chance of second thoughts, no opportunity of giving even an in-

voluntary warning to their families or of leaving farewell messages. With true Russian suspicion, the people who arranged their flights probably did not altogether trust them.

Both went off with such an utterly cold-blooded lack of excitement or emotion, both bade such fantastically casual good-byes to those nearest to them, that they could not have realized they would not soon be seeing their loved ones again. Had Melinda really known she was going never to return would she not at least have taken her mother in her arms and embraced her? She was a warm, affectionate daughter, and had she done this, Mrs. Dunbar would have had no suspicions at all that there was anything unusual happening. Donald did not even kiss Melinda; he went off exactly as if he might well be back later that night but would surely be home the following day. Certainly both of them were aware that a call of which they did not know the exact nature would come at any moment, and Melinda at least took the somewhat feminine precaution of taking her clothes and other possessions with her "in case." Or so it seems to me.

There are several points about the actual mechanics of Donald's flight that suggest that he knew in advance that he would be going before long. As I have mentioned, he had for some time before May 25 been asking Melinda, whose baby was to be born on June 14, when her mother was arriving at Tatsfield. It was not just a casual "When do you expect your mother?" but a reiterated, insistent question to which he really wanted an answer. It was not that Donald was either particularly fond of his mother-in-law or especially

antagonistic towards her. She had welcomed him warmly when he first arrived in the United States as Melinda's husband. And if her liking for him had steadily diminished as he made Melinda progressively more unhappy, she gave no obvious signs of this. It seems clear that Donald, knowing that he might have to leave suddenly and knowing that his departure might coincide with the difficult, dangerous birth of Melinda's baby, at least wished to temper his responsibility by the thought that his wife would not be completely alone.

Then, there is the invitation to dinner of Guy Burgess, whose place in this mystery is far from clear. This was not entirely a last-minute arrangement, for Donald told Melinda the previous day that he would be bringing "Roger Styles"—as Burgess, for reasons best known to himself, had called himself—to dinner on Friday night. This shows that the meeting was not suddenly arranged in response to an urgent telephone call received late on Friday afternoon by Burgess, whose original plans for the evening and the week-end we know to have been quite different ones.

The most extraordinary aspect of the flight was, however, the means the two men selected of crossing from England to France. It really seems as if they had gone out of their way to make their movements during this part of their flight easy to trace. A possible explanation is that they were given the name of a rendezvous in France—almost certainly Paris—but given no other instructions. Burgess, who appears to have had a melodramatic mind, took charge of the arrangements, and, possibly because of a time factor—after

dinner at Tatsfield they would have been too late for a plane or ordinary train-sea service that night—hit upon the bright idea of the Southampton—Saint-Malo route. This, while a little unnecessary, might have served their purposes if the journey itself had been made with rather more discretion. The last-minute arrival at Southampton and the leaving of the hired car—why hire a car at all? Donald and Burgess both had cars—on the quayside were mistakes, but the taking of return tickets was a cardinal error.

By a strange coincidence, while I was writing this book I met a friend who knew a passenger travelling on the *Falaise* at the same time as Donald and Guy Burgess. This friend said that the boat was held up for one hour at Saint-Malo that Saturday morning, while a search was made for two missing passengers, whose names were called over a loudspeaker. The man could remember only one name—Burgess—and was not absolutely sure whether the other name given was Maclean. He remarked that there had been considerable grumbling on board at the “two young drunks” who had caused the delay and without whom the ship eventually sailed. (This assured that the captain would report their failure to rejoin the ship on his arrival at Southampton on Monday morning.) They also left their curiously assorted luggage on board—Donald’s briefcase containing pyjamas and shaving gear and Burgess’s two suitcases full of brand-new holiday clothes—as if to draw attention to their disappearance, in case it had not been noticed when the ship sailed from Saint-Malo.

It is just possible that their rendezvous was not in Paris

but in Saint-Malo or Rennes or even on board the *Falaise*, but it is difficult to imagine the professional communist agents, who presumably took over-all charge of the operation, selecting a meeting place where two such unmistakable Englishmen would stand a good chance of being noticed.

On the other hand, did it really matter if they were noticed? Had the earlier part of their flight been as efficient and as secret as the latter, the mystery of the Missing Diplomats would have been greater. And it could have been increased even more had not Donald and Guy Burgess been permitted to send the telegrams to their families which, while they did little to indicate what had happened to them, at least gave the presumption they were still alive—a fact many people were beginning to doubt. But to this day British intelligence services do not know for certain how the two men went after they left Saint-Malo, or even where they went. While there is every presumption that they are behind the Iron Curtain, there is no proof even of that. And this, from the viewpoint of the Soviets, whose only contribution to the mystery has been a flat denial that the Macleans and Burgess are in Russia or that the Soviet government know anything at all about them, is probably all that matters.

I did not know Guy Burgess and I find it extraordinarily hard to understand what part he played in this tragedy. He was by all accounts very different from Donald—in background, mentality, attainments, and outlook. Apart from their Cambridge days, which overlapped, as Burgess was two years older than Donald, there is no evidence that they were

ever anything but chance acquaintances. Certainly they were not close friends, and from 1944 onwards they were rarely in the same country, let alone the same city, at the same time. Mutual friends declare that at Cambridge, where Burgess was also a member of left-wing groups and probably also of the Communist Party, he had considerable influence on Donald, but from what one knows of the characters of these two men when they grew to maturity, it is highly unlikely that this influence persisted.

Burgess was the type of neurotic who was almost certain to end up high in the ranks of the Fascist conspiracy or the Communist Party—but far more probably the first, for he certainly had none of the discipline that the communist hierarchy demands from its followers. He, like Donald, had been a boy of great promise; he had a first-class mind that, but for his chronic instability of temperament, might have taken him far. From Eton he went to Trinity, Cambridge, where he took a good First in History and was tempted to become a don. Instead he seems to have amused himself by some vague writing, until in 1936 he joined the B.B.C. Talks Department, where he remained until the beginning of 1939. At this time, he left to do “highly confidential work for the War Office.” He went back to the B.B.C. two years later, and remained there, working in the European-propaganda Department, until June, 1944, when he joined the News Department of the Foreign Office. He later became private secretary to Mr. Hector McNeil, the Minister of State, and then transferred to the Far Eastern Department, where he

remained until he was posted to Washington in 1950—just as Donald was returning from Cairo.

But, as Mr. Herbert Morrison stated in the House of Commons after the disappearance, Burgess was never a member of the senior branch of the Foreign Service and held only the “temporary and local rank of Second Secretary.” He was unpopular with his colleagues, had generally a bad reputation, and towards the end was under a certain suspicion. In Washington he had become violently anti-American—far worse than Donald, as he was unrestrained even when sober—and as he was a perpetual, torrential talker, there was hardly anyone within range who did not at one time or other hear Burgess’s opinions. He was also a persistent, heavy drinker and a homosexual.

But Burgess too wished to remake the world, not patiently, painstakingly, and with humility like Donald, but with fierce, impetuous intolerance. He was arrogant and conceited, and he regarded the rest of humanity as a group of witless sheep who needed someone like Guy Burgess to lead them to their salvation—the kind of salvation he would plan for them and certainly not what they would choose for themselves. His own salvation possibly lay in the fact that a lot of people were amused by him. But even his entertainment value would not have saved him much longer, for on May 7, 1951—just over a fortnight before he and Donald disappeared—he was sent back to London in disgrace, and dismissal from the Foreign Service would soon have followed.

A few months after the disappearance but before there

was anything concrete to go on, I was talking to a member of the Foreign Service who knew both Maclean and Burgess. His opinion then was that they had gone behind the Iron Curtain and that the impetus for their move, the inspiration, had come from Burgess. He thought that Burgess was probably still a Communist, but as Burgess had frequently changed his political opinions, it was not easy to tell exactly what he was. The official said he would, however, be amazed to learn that Donald was a Communist. What he imagined had happened was that Burgess, who had returned from Washington with a conviction that America was heading for another war, had no hope that anyone—even Guy Burgess—could influence American politicians, and had decided to go on a personal mission to Moscow to try to induce Stalin to change his policies and to make the peace overtures America would not. Burgess, suggested my friend, could keep nothing to himself, had told Donald about his plan, and had probably induced him to go along with him. What was then known of the route the two men took confirmed the member of the Foreign Service in his opinion, for to him it bore all the hall-marks of Burgess's rather feverish initiative.

A fuller examination of the Maclean story from its known inceptions disproves this theory. It is highly unlikely that these two men would have been able, uninvited, to have made their way behind the Iron Curtain without very considerable negotiations and delays. For why should Russia welcome them? Burgess was at the very heights of emotional instability—a heavy drinker, unreliable, unrestrained,

slightly untrustworthy—and besides this had nothing to offer. Donald too could not on first sight, or rather on his more recent record, have appeared a very attractive proposition. For while the Communists would have been ready to welcome with open arms foreign scientists and technical experts, provided always that they were of outstandingly high qualifications, they cannot have felt any particular need to take into the fold officials of the British Foreign Service—even one of Donald's seniority—who did not even speak Russian. Had such men asked for asylum would not the Russians have immediately made propagandist capital out of them?

Surely the logical explanation is that Burgess as well as Donald Maclean had for a long time been working for the Soviet Union. It does not of course prove anything, but both of the men had at different times told friends—who were incredulous in the case of Donald; rather shaken but not entirely disbelieving in the case of Burgess—that they were secret agents of the Communists. But even if those statements, made several years earlier, had remained true and both Burgess and Maclean had continued to be secret communist agents, how did it come about that they fled together—or were called back together? They were, as I have shown earlier, not close friends and were working in different parts of the world. Careful inquiries failed to reveal any contact at all between them in the sixteen days between Burgess's return from Washington and their disappearance, although as they moved more or less in the same circles in London and

were in the same service, chance meetings cannot be ruled out. Even if they were both Soviet agents, it would be contrary to usual communist practice for either to have known that the other was serving the same masters. Their disappearance together is one of the more impenetrable aspects of the mystery, and until far more light is thrown upon it by official sources in London or Moscow, or until one of the missing men tells his story, it is possible only to guess at the answer.

From the communist viewpoint it is likely that Donald was by far the more important of the two. Not only was he better placed to collect information or to influence policies, but he had something positive to offer in his own specialized knowledge and abilities. And I think, therefore, the answer could be that Moscow, having insisted or agreed that Donald was to be got out of England, decided that Burgess—who knew that Donald was a communist agent and would know what had happened when he disappeared—could not be entirely relied upon to keep his mouth closed, and instructed him to accompany Donald. If two members of the Foreign Service, two British diplomats, had to disappear behind the Iron Curtain, it was obviously better that they should go together. Not only would the public reaction to a second disappearance be so great as to cause the Soviets some inconvenience, but the second man, Burgess, might come under suspicion in the inquiry that would follow the first disappearance and might not be able to get away.

It is clear that Donald was number-one priority, and I am

sure he knew some time before he actually fled that he was going, even if he did not know until the last minute exactly when or how he would go. Burgess's departure, on the other hand, had all the marks of something quite unexpected. He had not long returned from America, and his return was not of his own volition. However much he may have welcomed the recall to England he could not have known of it long in advance—he was clearly planning a holiday abroad with a new friend he had met on shipboard; he had made two important engagements for the days immediately following his disappearance (engagements he hoped would result in a new job to replace his irretrievably lost position in the Foreign Service); and right up until May 24 he had been engaged in his usual febrile round of parties.

The basically different nature of the two men's approaches to their departures may well have made the early investigations so intensely baffling; it is as if detectives called upon to investigate the death of two people found in the same locked library eventually discovered that each had been the victim of a different murderer.

But I should think it was Burgess who received the final instructions and who made the last-minute plans. For of the two Burgess was the man of action.

And so they went, without warning, without farewells, without emotion. A large-scale, methodical manhunt for them went on for weeks. But the trail ended at Saint-Malo, or possibly Rennes, from which point, I imagine, they were taken in charge by professional Soviet Intelligence agents

and whisked rapidly behind the Iron Curtain. Even in the short space of the week-end, which was the time limit of complete safety of movement before any kind of alarm was likely to be given or search opened, there were many routes they could have taken, any one of which would have brought them to their journey's end by Monday morning at the latest. But I imagine that after having drawn attention to themselves by their antics between Southampton and Saint-Malo, they split up and continued their journeys separately. This might account for the failure of a really thorough inquiry to produce anyone who had noticed two tall, fair-haired Englishmen travelling across France to their destiny.

What was journey's end? Surely it must have been Moscow, for where else would the two men go, whether the flight was their own initiative in an attempt to contact the top Soviet leaders or whether they were obeying a summons, a twitching on the long cord that bound them to Soviet masters? Various newspapers have frequently reported that they have been seen at various places behind the Iron Curtain, but on what authority or what evidence I do not know. The most persistent report, given with steadily increasing detail, places Donald, now joined by Melinda and the children, at Kladno, a small town on the outskirts of Prague—a kind of outer residential suburb. My own paper stated categorically last December:

M.I. 5 know the Macleans are living at Kladno; know the family have a ten-room villa, the children a local nurse, and that the household runs as a normal home of a civil servant;

know that the Macleans have a Russian-built car, which Donald uses for driving into Prague; know Mrs. Maclean frequently accompanies him there.

But I do not believe that M.I. 5 know anything of the sort; my information leads me to believe that M.I. 5 have no definite knowledge of the Macleans' whereabouts, except for the vague conviction that they are, as Mr. Selwyn Lloyd implied in the House of Commons, behind the Iron Curtain.

It should be realized that it is not only the British intelligence services who are at least keeping an extremely watchful eye open for any sign of the Missing Diplomats, if not actively searching for them. American, French, and all other Western agencies are just as anxious as the British agencies to solve this mystery. In that case Kladno or Prague or any place in the more accessible satellites would be far too dangerous a residence for people whom—as the rigorous Soviet silence proves—Moscow wishes to keep hidden. Most of the Western countries have diplomatic or consular missions in these countries; they are visited nowadays by occasional Western football teams, racing cyclists, and other sportsmen; and there are quite a number of Western nationals living there. Somebody would be bound to have seen the Macleans, and, unless the British government and its representatives on various levels are being deliberately misleading and evasive, this has apparently not happened.

Even Moscow will not be eternally secure, for that citadel of Russian secretiveness is slowly opening up to Western visitors. But it is an exceedingly large city, and there are still

many sectors that are out of bounds to the West. Unless Donald and Melinda are hidden away in some other Russian city, Moscow is almost certainly where they now are, if for no other reason than because of Donald's work. For Donald is unlikely to be permitted to sit around in idleness, drawing a salary from the Soviet government for doing nothing. If he is not in prison, which seems obvious from the fact that agents contrived the flight of Melinda and the children to join him, then he must earn money to live. He is certainly working for the Communists, and he could indeed be very useful to them, while continuing to pursue his idealistic campaign for peace.

Donald did not lightly earn his high reputation in the Foreign Service. He had a wide, general knowledge of international affairs; his judgment, when not clouded by his misguided ideals, was sound and sharp; and he was a most accomplished draftsman of all the notes, reports, dispatches, and minutes that form the backbone of diplomacy. I believe that immediately after his flight Donald was employed by the Soviet government as a kind of adviser on Western affairs. It would have been his task to advise his new masters on the best way of drafting their diplomatic notes to the West to assure that the messages would obtain their maximum impact; and he could have assessed with the eye of an expert the various pronouncements of Western statesmen. Indeed, only a few months after Donald's disappearance I was told by a British expert on Russian affairs that "passages in pure Foreign Office terminology" were beginning to appear in

Soviet notes. Before long, however, I believe Donald was given a new appointment and one which he still holds: he is one of the chiefs of the Soviet government's Psychological Warfare Department.

This is extremely important, for it has a definite influence upon Russia's relations with the West. It was already apparent about the time there was the change in Soviet notes that there was also a radical change of attitude by Soviet representatives in the Western world; they began to shed a little of their aloofness and habitual rudeness and became almost cordial to their Western colleagues. This change, and indeed a far deeper change in Soviet policy, was accentuated and accelerated after Stalin's death. It is unlikely that this was entirely because of Donald Maclean's advice, but people whose job it is to examine everything that has to do with Russia and Russian policy profess to see Donald's hand in at least some of the changes.

I do not suggest that there is any fundamental change in Soviet policy or Soviet aims. The difference is in the methods, and it is obvious that the new methods are far more successful and infinitely more difficult to counter than was the old "tough" policy. In one particular manoeuvre of vital importance in the cold war—Russia's attempts to split the Allies and drive a wedge between England and America—Donald could more than earn whatever it is the Soviet government is paying him. His intimate knowledge of both countries, illuminated by his inside experience of their high-level and even secret policies, must enable him to use his sharp, bitter

intelligence to great effect, most particularly as he had a profound distrust of American policy, as I have said.

The source from which I obtained my information—and I can say no more than that it was neither British nor American—gave the opinion that Donald was “doing an extremely good job for Russia.”

Donald, I was informed, is at present living in a sort of satellite city some sixty miles from Moscow, which was built solely to house the many foreigners working for the Russian government, particularly in the psychological-warfare field. The “community” is a cross between a compound and a prison: the inmates have excellent living conditions, large, comfortable houses and gardens, shops, clubs, schools—but no freedom of movement. There are guards all around, ostensibly to protect the great radio transmitters there but also to see that no one leaves without permission. On the rare occasions when any of the foreigners has to go to Moscow or elsewhere in Russia, armed guards accompany him.

There, in this town with no name, Melinda and the children probably joined Donald. She was almost certainly told that if she did not like it she would be free to leave, taking her children with her. Will the Russians keep that promise? It seems highly unlikely.

As to Guy Burgess, it is not easy to see him fitting comfortably into the Soviet way of life. He too, however, with his experience in journalism and in propaganda broadcasts, in addition to his Foreign Service work, could be of a certain

utility to his new Soviet masters. About the same time that the altering phraseology of official Soviet notes began to attract the attention of specialists, there was a marked improvement in the English, the presentation, and the contents of Russia's most important English-language propaganda publication, a weekly magazine with the cumbersome title: *For a Lasting Peace and a People's Democracy*. It is possible that Burgess had become its editor. Since the magazine is ostensibly published in Bucharest, it appears that the two men who have gained world-wide notoriety as "Burgess and Maclean—the Missing Diplomats" have again gone their separate ways.

How much do the British authorities really know of the disappearance of these two men? How much, one might even ask, do they want to know? As we have seen, seventeen days after Burgess and Maclean disappeared, the Foreign Secretary took the line that it was not in the public interest to disclose the security aspects of the case, which were still under investigation.

In the following three years, there has been practically no variation in the line taken by Foreign Office spokesmen. On January 24, 1954—two years and eight months after the disappearance—the government did for a moment lift one tiny corner of the curtain that has been drawn firmly over their knowledge of the Burgess and Maclean case when Mr. Selwyn Lloyd made his famous admission that the men could be presumed to be behind the Iron Curtain. But Mr. Lloyd got quickly back into line, for in answer to a further ques-

tion he said, "Investigations are continuing, but no detailed account of their nature can be given without prejudicing the chances of their success."

What is one to deduce from that? Without knowing more than anyone in an official position has been persuaded to reveal in public or in private, it is extremely difficult to believe the exact truth of that assertion. How could it prejudice three-year-old investigations for the government to disclose what they know of Burgess and Maclean?—for an official spokesman to say, in effect, "We have established that the missing men took such and such a route that led to the frontiers of the Iron Curtain. There their trail was lost, but such information as we have been able to gather points to the fact that they are now in such and such a place. We believe Maclean is doing this, and Burgess that"?

This is what everyone wants to know. The people at large are not interested in the "nature of the investigation"; they are not seeking wilfully to embarrass the government or imperil the efficiency of our intelligence services. They have a great and legitimate curiosity in the final or at least the subsequent chapters in the exciting and disquieting history of the Missing Diplomats; they badly want to know what has happened to that ill-assorted and unstable couple, Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean, and to Melinda and her three small children. And if the government do not really know—which is the most probable reason for obstinate official reticences—few people would be likely to blame them, if they did not seek to hide their failure behind specious excuses of security;

investigations behind the Iron Curtain, with no assistance whatsoever from the communist governments, are obviously a matter of extreme difficulty.

What the public could well blame the government for is not telling the people what they can, for after three years of investigations they must know something, must have something they could safely say.

The danger of this continued silence is that it gives rise to suspicions that the whole affair is being hushed up because of what has been uncovered by the investigations, of what has been discovered of the earlier activities of Maclean and Burgess. It is felt that far from wanting to find the missing men, the government are praying that they never hear of them again, would be utterly appalled if Burgess and Maclean were suddenly to turn up and tell their stories. This may be all wrong. It may be strictly true that the inquiries into the career of Donald Maclean revealed nothing suspicious at all. But until there is a plain, unequivocal statement these doubts must persist.

This is particularly the case because there seems to me to have been a long-standing "cover-up" for Donald. Was his heavy drinking in Washington, his open opposition to British and American policy, his violent, bitter criticism of the United States, ever brought to official notice? Did anyone in a senior position ever reprimand him or—what would have been more helpful and might possibly have averted the tragedy to come—try to reason with him, advise him, help

him? Was his quite outrageous behaviour in Cairo officially reported to the Foreign Office? It seems obvious that it was not, for when the first and only full statement on the case of the Missing Diplomats was made and debated in the House of Commons, the only references to Donald's career were warm tributes on the excellence of his work from two Foreign Secretaries. Were his superiors then in full possession of the facts, and had they decided that these lapses were merely the result of overstrain? And did they then weigh Donald in the balance and decide that his undoubtedly excellent work, his outstanding ability, his likeableness, and his popularity were of sufficient value to the Foreign Service to make it expedient to ignore his faults?

How was it that he returned from Cairo, sidetracked a full medical examination and any treatment that was necessary from the official Foreign Office physician, and went gaily to a private psychiatrist, whose certificate alone was sufficient to enable Mr. Herbert Morrison to inform the House that Donald had recovered? How did he then obtain the appointment as head of the American Department?—for which he seemed unsuited both in view of his known opinions and in view of the fact that considerable feeling had been aroused in American diplomatic circles, in Cairo at least, because during his final fling he had broken up the apartment of a member of the American Embassy staff. Who through all the later stages of his career was sheltering, backing, and indeed pushing Donald Maclean? Were the reasons merely friend-

ship, Foreign Office solidarity, respect and admiration for his family, or was it something more sinister? Finally, why were M.I. 5 warnings ignored by the Foreign Office?

All these questions demand an answer if the suspicion is not to persist that there are dark undertones to the case of the Missing Diplomats. There may be an entirely satisfactory answer to all these queries, but until some reply is given, one just does not know. All I can say personally is that almost everyone to whom I went in search of information—people of various nationalities and in official as well as private capacities—was helpful and talked freely to me; almost everyone except British “official sources.” There I ran up against a wall of silence and a hasty and slightly offensive retreat behind the “prohibition against disclosure of information” as laid down in rules and regulations. All I really wanted was that the accuracy of certain reported facts be checked, but even this was refused.

I asked an American Secret Service officer what he thought of M.I. 5. “A first-class outfit,” he said, “but they don’t tell you much.” Because of the accuracy of the second part of that judgment, I can offer no opinion on the first!

But despite the silence of the British agencies, little scraps of news of the Missing Diplomats were obtained from time to time. In the late summer of 1952, well over a year after the disappearance, I met an American diplomat who had been a close friend in Cairo in the years when Donald Maclean had been Counsellor at the British Embassy. This man had since been posted back to Washington; but he was attending a con-

ference in Paris at the time, and we dined together. Our talk turned to Egypt, our days in Cairo, and our mutual acquaintances there.

My American friend said suddenly, "You were a friend of Donald Maclean's. Did you know he was seen in Warsaw? The State Department received information from someone whose name or position I cannot tell you, who knew Donald well when he was at the embassy in Washington. He stated definitely that he saw Donald in a street in Warsaw a little while ago. It's presumed he was on a visit from Moscow. The State Department has put this out officially to all our diplomatic posts abroad."

This was indeed interesting news, and I made further inquiries, which, while they produced no confirmation of the Warsaw story, did lead me to believe without possibility of doubt that it was officially "strongly presumed" that Donald was in Moscow. I found too that although Melinda had been told nothing by the Foreign Office or by M.I. 5, she too believed that Donald was behind the Iron Curtain at that time. So I wrote the story for the *News Chronicle*.

The immediate result was a flat denial from both the Foreign Office and the State Department. They said in so many words, "We know nothing about the Missing Diplomats."

And yet there must have been something in the story of Donald's having been seen and reliably identified in Warsaw. My informant was an entirely responsible senior American diplomat; he gave me the information gratuitously simply

because I was a friend of Donald's; he did not actively think of me at that time as a journalist.

Some time later, after my story had been published, Melinda asked M.I. 5 whether they knew anything about Donald's whereabouts, and if so why they had not told her. The answer was that they had received a report that Donald had been seen in Warsaw but considered that "the identification was not sufficiently reliable." How reliable it was I am not in a position to judge. But it was considered good enough, before it got into the press, for senior State Department officials to circulate the information to their missions abroad.

The British government were perfectly within their rights, even if it could be argued that they erred on the side of caution, to refuse to divulge information of which they could not prove the authenticity, of which they were not one hundred per cent satisfied. But had they done so, I feel the Maclean story might have taken a different course, and Melinda might have been prevented from making a mistake for which it is certain she and her children are now paying. She would not have had the feeling that nothing was being done to trace her husband and that all the authorities wanted was that nothing more be heard of the case. If she and her mother had been warned against contacts from Donald or people speaking in his name, she would have been on the alert when this actually happened.

Actually someone did try to give Melinda a warning—but it never reached her. This was Mrs. Herman Field, whose husband disappeared in August, 1949. Herman Field had gone

to Prague and then to Warsaw in search of his brother, Noel Field, an official of the State Department, who had vanished from Warsaw in May of that year. Noel's German wife, Herta, went with her brother-in-law as far as Prague, where she too disappeared. Herman Field was released from a Polish prison in the fall of 1954, and Noel and his wife, who had been in prison in Hungary, were released a short time later. Their adopted daughter, also attempting to search for them, was arrested in East Berlin in 1950 and is now believed to be in a Siberian prison camp.

Mrs. Herman Field, I learned recently, told a friend of mine that if he knew Mrs. Maclean or was in a position to send her a message, he should warn her that she would be contacted by the Communists, but that, whatever they told her, she was to take no notice and on no account allow herself to be persuaded to go to Donald or to go to search for him. This warning would, I am sure, at least have opened Melinda's eyes to the danger and would have caused her to think desperately seriously when she was contacted. But whether her knowledge would have prevailed against what must surely have been powerful and potent arguments, cunningly and convincingly presented, I dare not say. For of all the problems posed by the Maclean story there is none to which it is so difficult to find a satisfactory answer as: why did Melinda go? To all of the other questions it is possible to find some kind of answer; one can make reasonable deductions from known facts. But with Melinda we enter the realm of pure emotion in which reason plays little part.

When Melinda drove off from Geneva with her three small children on that sultry September afternoon in 1953 she was knowingly and of her own free will going into exile—or, if she was not then to her certain knowledge actually on the way, she had made her preparations to go.

Melinda was going to join a husband who had deserted her twenty-seven months before, who had left her a few days before she was to bear his third child, who had made her notorious in the eyes of the world, and who, except for one insincere letter a few weeks after he disappeared, had not, as far as we know, written to her again. She was going to join a man with whom she had been nearly continuously unhappy in their eleven years of married life, who, she had been warned, was an incurable drunkard, who had shown homosexual tendencies, who had occasionally used violence towards her, who was a Communist, and who was almost certainly a traitor to his country. She was doing this although she had decided several months previously, after most agonizing deliberation, to divorce him and to try to rebuild her broken life. And she was going in full knowledge of the grievous hurt her action would cause her mother, her family, and her friends.

Why did she go?

It is a desperately difficult question to answer. Melinda, as we have seen, took no one into her confidence, let no one know directly or indirectly, by word or by hint, what she was intending to do. On the contrary, her actions and her words during the preceding months implied that far from

thinking of going to join Donald, she had finished with him and was determined to put him out of her life and out of her mind. That was, I am sure, her intention when in September, 1952, one year before she disappeared, she went with her mother to live in Geneva.

What made her change her mind? Clearly some message brought to her by a communist agent sent by Donald to contact her. The contacting must have been diabolically clever, for instead of recoiling in fear and horror and going at once to her mother, who would have informed M.I. 5, she kept her own counsel—and the insidious poisoning continued. Perhaps she was not able to ask her mother's advice, for it now seems likely that the first approach was made to Melinda some time during the four months between February and May, when Mrs. Dunbar was in the United States. There is no proof of this—there is no proof of anything—but those months would have been the logical time, and we have seen that in retrospect Melinda's behaviour looked very odd from that time until she disappeared.

Let us recapitulate the evidence that Melinda had decided to remake her life. In April, 1952, she went into a hospital in London for an operation. She remained there three weeks, during which time, she told me later, she discussed her position with a doctor and told him definitely that she had ceased to love Donald and intended to divorce him. In July, when Clare and I went to see her at Deauville, she told us the same thing and asked our advice about getting a job. She repeated this when we saw her for the last time in Geneva in Oc-

tober. Then in November, in London, she told various friends of her intentions and actually consulted her solicitors about the best way of opening divorce proceedings and of getting back her American passport. Soon after Melinda's return to Geneva Mrs. Dunbar flew to the United States, where she too saw lawyers and State Department officials about the divorce and the passport questions. When she found that the procedures would be easier and quicker in America than in England, she looked around for a suitable house, as both she and Melinda thought it would be best if they returned to their own country.

None of this is proof that Melinda would have taken any of the proposed steps. But at least it shows not only her intentions at that time but also the vague beginnings—incomplete and inconclusive certainly—of action to transform those intentions into accomplishment.

The change by the time Mrs. Dunbar returned was remarkable. Melinda, now apathetic and spiritless, took not the slightest interest in the steps her mother had taken in America. Mrs. Dunbar at the time attributed this lowness of spirit to her long absence, certain minor domestic difficulties, a growing distaste for Geneva, and Melinda's general inability to come to terms with life once more. Looking back now, one can deduce that Melinda, having already been in contact with her husband's emissaries, was living in a nerve-racking agony of indecision and suspense, made doubly difficult to bear by a vow she had probably been forced to take to say nothing at all to anyone. She may have been

threatened, may even have gone in fear of her life. One just does not know. But quite certainly she was somehow put in a position in which she was unable to turn to anyone for advice or for help. And on top of all this, the thought that she was continuously deceiving her mother, whom she loved and who was still being so generously kind to her, must have been almost the ultimate refinement of the torture to which she apparently thought she had to submit alone and unaided.

It is probable that the first approach to Melinda was so careful, so practically imperceptible, that she did not know it had happened. It was certainly not made by a traditional communist agent in circumstances of Hollywoodish mystery. A casual-seeming remark by someone in her own social milieu, someone she knew fairly well, someone who, unknown to her, had been carefully cultivating her for some time, was probably the opening gambit. It could have happened at a cocktail party or a dinner in Geneva, at a picnic in the pine-covered hills, or, most probably, during her skiing holiday at Saanenmöser.

Would the approach have taken the form of a message from Donald? I should say certainly not. I should imagine that Donald was kept most carefully in the background until the ground had been well prepared in another direction. My belief is that the opening move was an insidious and cunning suggestion that life inside the Soviet Union was by no means as dull and as unpleasant as it was painted. This might well arouse a spark of interest in a woman who was dissatisfied with her own life and, because it was almost certain that her

husband was in Russia, must have wondered a good deal about conditions of life there.

Obviously the first step in convincing Melinda would have to have been aimed at altering her opinion that communism was "terribly dreary." It would have to have been done with the utmost skill, and it is certain that whoever was assigned the task of preparing the way must have been excessively clever and excessively careful. If Melinda appeared receptive this opening could gradually have been followed up by further tales designed to implant in her troubled mind the idea that Russia was a paradise for children, that they were safe there because communism was synonymous with peace and the Soviet Union would never go to war. And then, after her confidence and interest had been gained, there would be a message from Donald, probably through a new intermediary.

What form could this message take to be convincing to a grievously wronged woman? It would certainly reaffirm Donald's love for her—something any woman is glad to hear, whatever she may feel about the man sending it; would give some plausible explanation of his desertion of her; would say that he had completely recovered, was not drinking, and was indeed a new man. It would probably also suggest that he was doing an important job in the interests of the peace of the world and that he held a high position, which entitled him to a fine house; and it would ask after the children. It would even, I suggest, say how much he longed for the children and for her, but that if she had ceased to love him, had

completely finished with him—as she would have been perfectly justified in doing—would she consider letting him have the children? And it would beg her, in her and her children's interests as well as his own, to say nothing to anybody about his message, about being in contact with him.

None of this would have deceived an intelligent, politically alert woman, but its effect upon a woman who was uncertain of herself and her future and was vaguely worried by the outlook for her fatherless children, could well have been profoundly troubling. We might assume that the message was carefully sent at a time when Melinda was alone—and be sure that Donald and the people working with him knew every movement of the entire family—and when she had no one at hand to turn to for advice.

But whatever Melinda's immediate reactions were, they cannot have been a flat rejection, a refusal to have anything to do with Donald. For, as is clear from what happened later, the messages continued, and it is likely that Melinda was in contact with communist agents all through that lovely Swiss spring and well into the summer.

At what point she made up her mind, what arguments finally convinced her, I do not know. But, as the secretive manner in which she had the children's photographs taken and enlarged shows, by the time Mrs. Dunbar returned to Geneva in the middle of May, Melinda must very nearly have made up her mind to go to Donald when the final instructions were given.

There can be two possible reasons why Melinda eventually

decided to go back to Donald. The first, which I will leave for the moment, includes personal ones; the second concerns the children. It seems possible that at some point in the negotiations, when Melinda was still hesitating, her contactors began to put pressure on her. They may have warned her that Donald was determined to have his children, and that if she did not agree to go with them they would be kidnapped. It would have been useless and indeed dangerous for her to go to the police or to the British security officials—which would be the normal and sensible reaction of any woman faced with such a threat—because she had already committed herself too decidedly to the communist agents. The people who contacted her may even have induced her to write letters or give some other proof that she had been in contact with communist agents over a long period without informing the British authorities—this would have been an idle threat except with a woman who was already very nearly at the breaking point. One can only guess at the methods these cold, unscrupulous agents of a ruthless ideology may have used. But certainly they got Melinda into their power and certainly she would never have let the children go without her.

By the time Mrs. Dunbar returned (even if, as the children's photographs suggest, the decision had probably been made) the final arrangements were clearly not complete. If this is true it is most curious that there was so long a delay. It would have been far simpler if the flight had taken place while Mrs. Dunbar was in the United States and Melinda was

completely on her own, answerable to no one for her movements and able to absent herself from her home for days, if not weeks, before any questions were asked, before anyone noticed. She and the children could have been nearly anywhere in the world before inquiries were opened, by which time the trail would have been cold and we might never have known with any certainty what had happened to them, where and how they had gone. The supposition that Melinda had gone to join her husband would then have been the only clue to the mystery.

Why the flight was not arranged at the time of Mrs. Dunbar's absence, we shall probably never know. Possibly Melinda, while having agreed in principle to join Donald, was still hesitating to take the plunge. Possibly she refused to make up her mind until she had once more seen her mother, whose advice she subsequently appeared to be on the point of asking on at least two occasions. Possibly the delay came from the other side, where either Donald or his masters may have had second thoughts about a step that could not fail to revive the world's interest in the Missing Diplomats.

The next important step was Melinda's change of plans on the eve of her departure to Majorca with her family, and her sudden desire to return, in summer, to the little winter resort of Saanenmöser. That was so odd and inexplicable, even for Melinda, that it must have had something to do with the decision hanging over her. At any rate, nothing which called for immediate action could have happened there, for five days later she returned to Geneva, and then went off to Majorca

for what appears to have been an enjoyable holiday on the whole and probably her last taste of untrammelled freedom. But even in Majorca it is clear that her mind was clouded with anxiety and never far from the step she was contemplating. Then Melinda went back to Geneva, and four more days passed before she too was irrevocably off to her journey's end—and Donald.

I think the only possible explanation of Melinda's decision is that despite everything that had happened, she must still have loved Donald. There must have been other considerations to tilt the scales; but they would all have to be superimposed on that one essential fact, for without some lingering remnants of her former love she could not have gone.

It is obvious that the agents who approached her were supremely clever; they had been well briefed and they brought a skill and a cunning to their task worthy of a more important mission than the deception of a defenceless woman. Those incautious and fragmentary sentences, almost meaningless at the time they slipped out involuntarily from her troubled mind, reveal the lines on which the agents could have worked: Donald was "fighting for peace," was helping to build a new and better world—a communist paradise. This was, for Melinda, not entirely a new song. Perhaps the seeds that Donald had planted took root and, under the subtle promptings of his agents, sent tiny shoots to the surface.

Then they would play on her maternal instincts. Melinda was an affectionate but slightly casual mother. Though she may have seemed too easily content to leave her children in

the care of their nurse, this is, after all, a widely prevalent habit among socially inclined mothers fortunate enough to be able to afford a nurse. Indeed, except for one interval of four months, Mrs. Dunbar had had the major burden in looking after the children, with whom she was wonderful. But this would not have prevented Melinda from responding to the argument that the children would have a safe and secure future in Russia. Donald's excellent position, too, would be an important consideration, for, little though she may have interested herself in what he was doing, Melinda had derived great satisfaction from her position as wife of a senior British diplomat.

However bad Melinda's relations with Donald had been, she had been generally happier in Cairo than in any of the other cities in which they had lived. She had loved the cosmopolitan life, the endless social round, the friends of many nationalities she had made. The effortlessness of housekeeping in a country where the well-to-do had plenty of cheap, good servants had also appealed greatly to her lazy nature. It is quite possible that she was sold the idea that the life she was being offered, the life of the wife of a senior official of the Soviet government, would be very much like the one she had enjoyed in Cairo. It may seem incredible that she could have believed this, if it was indeed what she was told, but so widespread is the general ignorance about life inside Russia today that it is possible for people to believe almost anything they wish.

But beneath all this there must have been some kind of

affection for Donald. The whole thing is meaningless, impossible, unbelievable, without that. For Melinda, as we know, was guided always by her emotions—and the final decision must have been taken in emotion and agony. She must have lived in the bottomless pit of hell in the weeks, possibly months, before she finally fled to join her man. All that time she was living in the closest possible contact with her mother, either in the little flat in the rue des Alpes or in the pension in Majorca, deceiving her, lying to her, hiding things from her. She must have been fully aware too, from her own bitter experiences, of the unbearable suspense and worry her flight would cause all her family, and also the blazing notoriety, the great black newspaper headlines, the mob of reporters and photographers who would descend upon them for the second major round in the mystery of the Missing Diplomats.

And there must have been an even heavier load on Melinda's conscience. She was not going by herself; she was taking the children. I think that even beyond the grief at her daughter's deception and flight, it was the idea that her beloved grandchildren had been taken willy-nilly behind the Iron Curtain that caused Mrs. Dunbar such unbearable sorrow that she practically collapsed. And I think Melinda must have known this would happen, for although what she did proves her to have been a harder-hearted, more ruthless, and more determined person than anyone had imagined, there is just a hint of shame in the pitiful, thin little letter she was allowed to send her mother. She felt the "sorrow and worry"

she was causing her, and hoped her mother would "understand." And, as Melinda always carried Donald's letter about with her, so will her mother never be parted from Melinda's.

But against the lingering embers of Melinda's love for Donald, against the sparkling mirage of life to which she was being drawn, none of this mattered. He had called her back to him—and so she went. She was in a way justifying herself to the world and to herself. She was no longer deserted, no longer unwanted: that was a salve to her hurt pride and a gratification of her love and her desire.

But she had to prepare herself for her journey; she had to beautify herself for her return to her loving husband. So, two days before she drove away, before she, like Donald before her, deserted her family and her old way of life, Melinda had her hair freshly washed and set; she bought new cosmetics and a new dress to add to her new nylon underwear and nightdresses. And, as a final touch, she put on new jewellery. Then she went—and at least she must have hoped that a lover would greet her at the end of the long, lonely road.

The final mystery, as profound as any posed by the Maclean story, is: why did Donald want Melinda back?

Donald was not guided by his emotions: his was a cold, logical, slightly selfish brain. He had undoubtedly loved Melinda once, but he had shown her little affection throughout their married life. And during his six-months' sick leave, when Melinda was living in Spain, Donald had assured friends in London that he was unutterably bored by Melinda and could not face living with her again. His letters at this

time in no way bore out that assertion, but that he made it there is no doubt. If he really felt this way about her, was his the kind of love to be revived and fortified by a twenty-seven months' absence? It seems improbable, but it must, in view of what happened, remain at least a possibility. It is also just possible that during the long separation Donald found he was more dependent upon Melinda than he had realized when he left her.

I think, however, we must look elsewhere for the real explanation. There seem to be two possibilities: first, that Donald wanted his children; or second, that his masters wanted Melinda.

Donald's paternal instincts were strong, inasmuch as he adored Fergie, his firstborn. He had been less fond of little Donald, and he had never seen the baby. But his affection for all his children and his desire to have them with him may well have grown much stronger during those two and a quarter years in a terribly alien land. What was he to do? He knew that Melinda would not be parted from the children and that she certainly would not let them go behind the Iron Curtain without her. He must have realized that the only way of getting his children, unless Melinda could be persuaded to accompany them, would be to have them kidnapped. And although this would be no new departure for the Communists, it would risk creating an international storm of such violence that probably his masters would not then agree.

But they would, and clearly did, make use of their wide-

spread intelligence organization to convince her that it was in her interests to go voluntarily behind the Iron Curtain. And they did so, I suggest, because they wanted her there with him.

The Soviet government have made no obvious use of Donald; they have denied any knowledge of him. But it seems fairly certain that he is working for them, in all probability as some kind of adviser. That is not to say that on some future occasion they may not want him to fulfill the role many Western observers expected him to take on when he fled behind the Iron Curtain: that of a propagandist for the communist cause. In that role they may well want his American-born wife to support him, to make *her* appeal to the *women* of the West. Most certainly they would not want the West to be able to use her to counter Donald's efforts—to contradict his pro-communist appeals.

In deceiving her mother, her family, and her friends, poor Melinda has been doubly deceived: there was certainly no glamorous, easy life, no loving husband, waiting for her behind the Iron Curtain.

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